THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF MUSIC AND ENGLISH POETRY

DURING THE MIDDLE AGES (1150-1500)

by

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Abstract

This thesis must be regarded as an outline, rather than an exhaustive study, of the inter-relationship of music and poetry during the Middle Ages (that is, from the middle of the twelfth to the end of the fifteenth century).

It is always difficult to set limits for creative movements and, when they have been set, to justify them and to work consistently within them, for one cannot make definite divisions between movements, nor confine trends of thought and creative impulse within the boundaries of a definite space of time. The year 1150 was chosen as the first limit of this essay because little in English has come down to us from the first half of the century, and the small amount that has, belongs to the Old English rather than the Middle English tradition. Since medieval and renaissance trends overlapped each other throughout the entire fifteenth century the terminal limit (1500) had to be chosen arbitrarily. The adoption of 1500 has more than the convenience of a round number to recommend it, however, for most of the literature of the fifteenth century belongs to the Middle English tradition; even those developments at the end of the century which look forward to the renaissance are not of such a revolutionary character that they cannot be considered as still part of medieval literature.

While music shows some analogies with all its sister arts, it is the art of poetry that it resembles most. The present work, therefore, deals primarily with the characteristics of the form and style of medieval music (special emphasis being given to the music of the church) and its influence on poetic forms like the lyric and liturgical drama. The main contention of the thesis is that, during the monodic period of music, the two arts were completely dependent on one another. With the development of polyphony, however, music became so intricate that it could no longer be used as a vehicle for words. The old union of poetry and music was gone, never to return in quite the same way again. Although it is true that music and poetry came together for a brief period in the Elizabethan Age it was not the same kind of unity. In the renaissance, music and poetry were two mature arts that enhanced one another; either one could be enjoyed without the other, but, in the Middle Ages, (that is, the period in which monodic music flourished) neither the music nor the poetry was complete in itself -- they were created for one another.

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Chapter I

Although philosophers and musicologists of all
ages in historic times have advanced many theories in
an endeavour to explain the origin of music, they have
been unable to present any one theory which has not been
the subject of dispute. For example, the philosophers of
ancient cultures taught that music was given to man by
the gods, while those of more sophisticated times suggested
that music may have been associated with work rhythms or
with man's need to express strong emotions like rage, pain,
fear, or love. Whatever the theory, however, the true
origin of music remains as much a mystery to us as its
date in the beginnings of time.

Since musicologists have no extant records from
which to determine the manner of the birth of music they
assume that the development of primitive cultures mirrors
that of European races. From a study of the savage races
of today[1] musicologists have been able to evolve certain
theories, one of which is that (with living primitives,
at least) "music begins with singing[2]". This conclusion

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[1] The continents of Africa and Australia, where
aboriginal races survive in number, offer the richest fields
for investigation.

[2] Some early twentieth-century musicologists felt
that music had its origin in the dance. M. Dalcrozi (an
authority on eurythmics) went so far as to suggest that
"... all the rhythmic elements in music were originally
formed after rhythms of the human body ...." Quoted by

is based on the fact that no songless people has ever
been discovered. The Stone Age, for instance, still
endures in parts of the Austral continent and tribes with-
out musical instruments are said to exist, but even they
have well-developed songs. Since song is such a universal
means of self-expression it must be as instinctive in
human beings as it is in many species of birds[3].

Primitive music[4] is characteristically performed
in conjunction with tribal custom and ritual, rarely for
its own sake. As the ritual connection of the music
frequently links it with words, the emphasis is placed on
the voice. Even when instruments are used to accompany
the songs the voice is of primary importance, indicating
that in the early stages of its development music is
mainly a vehicle for words.

What is known of ancient Greek music (which is

T. Taig in Rhythm and metre, Cardiff, University of Wales,
1929, p. 118. Modern students, however, feel that sound
came before rhythm. For further information on this
viewpoint v. Sachs, C., The rise of music in the ancient
world, East and West, New York, Norton and Co., 1943, p. 21.

[3] Pound, L., Poetic origins and the ballad,
New York, Macmillan Co., 1921, p. 29.

[4] From the inherent conservatism of primitive races
there is little reason to suppose that their music has
greatly changed over long periods. As a result, the
main features of surviving primitive music must give a
broad idea of primitive music in antiquity.

one of the oldest distinct musical styles studied by
musicologists) clearly indicates that the Greeks, too,
always included the words in the term music. In fact,
Plato declared that music was not music at all unless it
had a text[5]. The Greeks actually had two different
meanings for this art; "the one broad, the other narrow:

> ...In the broad sense it meant the
> whole of intellectual or literary culture,
> as opposed to the culture of the bodily
> faculties, grouped under the term
> gymnastics.
> ...In the narrow sense.../the Greeks/
> included under music...the dance
> movements which accompanied /the/
> singing, and the poetic text itself[6]".

This definition indicated a dichotomy between song (in
the broadest sense of that word) and every other branch
of artistic culture[7].

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[5] The laws, transl. G. Burgess, London, G. Bell
and Sons, 1902-1908, vol. 5, II, 669, E.

[6] Translation quoted by G. Reese in Music in the
Middle Ages, New York, Norton and Co., 1940, p. 11.

[7] Besides including music in the arts of the
nine muses, the Greeks regarded it as a great civilizing
factor, linking music with education and government.
They expounded, too, the doctrine of ethos, or magical
effects of the different modes on men. These theories
formed part of the traditions handed on to the Middle
Ages by Boethius. For further information on the doctrine
of ethos v. Plato's The republic, transl. H. Davies,
London, G. Bell and Sons, 1902-1908, vol. 2, III, 398, E,
also Aristotle's The politics, transl. Ernest Barker,
Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1946, vi(iv) 3, a 20, and
v(viii) 5, 1340, a 38.

Greek traditions of music were transmitted
through the late Roman writers, Boethius (480-524 A.D.)
and Cassiodorus (477-570 A.D.), whose works, representing
the last bastion of pagan thought, undoubtedly had a
profound influence on European music during the Middle
Ages.

These two writers, taking the Greek theories as
a foundation, evolved their own interpretation of the
classifications of music. Boethius, in his <u>De institutione
musica</u>, divided his music into three main categories:
"(1) <u>musica mundana</u> (harmony in the macrocosmos),
(2) <u>Musica humana</u> (harmony in the microcosmos, i.e. man), and
(3) <u>musica instrumentis constituta</u> (practical music, an
imitation of 1 and 2). Several modern authors have thought
that (3) consisted of instrumental music only, but it seems,
in fact, to have included vocal music as well, the word
<u>instrumentis</u> here representing all natural and artificial
means whereby man may wilfully produce music. Cassiodorus
divided music into (1) <u>scientia harmonica</u> (dealing with the
structure of melody), (2) <u>scientia rhythmica</u> (dealing with
the correspondence between melody and text), and (3)
<u>scientia metrica</u> (dealing with metrical analysis)[8]."

Since the musical theories of Boethius and Cassiodorus

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[8] Reese, G., <u>Music in the Middle Ages</u>, p. 118.

were almost the only ones taught in the early Middle Ages,
the musicians of that period depended, to a large extent,
on the works of these two men for the fundamentals of
their art. In the eleventh century the eminent Swiss (or German?)
theorist, Hermannus Contractus, gave his version of
Boethian theory thus:

> Oportet autem nos scire, quod omnis
> musicae rationis ad hoc spectat intentio,
> ut cantilenae rationabiliter componendae,
> regulariter iudicandae, decenter
> modulandae scientia comparetur[9].

It is not surprising to find, therefore, that there
was a very close association of text and music in the
Middle Ages. Indeed, poetry was regarded as a branch of
music, for, not only were poems performed orally (often
with harp accompaniment), but they were written by musician-
poets who were expected to supply both text and music.

The oral presentation of poetry goes back to the
days of antiquity and seems to have been a custom common
to most European peoples. Now oral presentation does not
necessarily mean that the poems were sung (as we understand
the term today), but rather, that they were either chanted
on a single note with a drop of the voice at the end of

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[9] Ellinwood, L., ed., _Musica Hermanni Contracti_,
New York, G. Schirmer Inc., 1936, p. 47.
"Moreover we should know this, namely that all the
theories of music have this purpose in view, that there may
be established a system of putting a song together methodically,
of judging it according to rule, and of rendering it in a
fitting manner." For this translation I am indebted to
Dr. G. B. Riddehough of U.B.C.

the phrase, or sung to a simple tune which was repeated
over and over until the completion of the poem. The
performance might or might not be accompanied by the harp,
depending on the talent of the performer.

From early times music (that is, singing to harp
accompaniment) occupied a position of great importance
in Britain. Unfortunately, the earliest songs and poems
(those of the Celtic bards) were not preserved in writing.
As a result, our first recorded literature comes from the Anglo-
Saxons whose traditions were somewhat similar to those of the
Celts. There are many references in Old English poetry to the
scop singing, either for entertainment or for a special event
like a funeral or wedding. Perhaps the best illustration of
the scop's art is the poem Widsith which is the story of a
professional singer or poet who wandered from court to court
singing songs and giving an account of his experiences.

'Đonne wit Scilling scīran reorde
'for uncrum sigedryhtne song āhōfan
'hlūde bī hearpan hlēoþor swinsade;
'þonne monige men mōdum wlonce
'wordum sprecan, þā þe wēl cūþan,
'þaet hī nǣefre song sēllan ne hȳdron[10].

[10] "Widsith," An Anglo-Saxon verse-book, ed.,
W.J. Sedgefield, Manchester University Press, 1922, p. 4, 11.103-108.
              'When I and Skilling for our conquering lord
              With clear voice raised the song, loud to the harp,
              The sound was music; many a stately man,
              Who well knew what was right, then said in words
              That never had they heard a happier song.
              Transl. found in Select translations from Old English
poetry, ed., A.S. Cook and C.B. Tinker, Harvard University
Press, 1935, 11. 103-107.

Singing to the harp was not confined to professional singers, however, for in an often quoted passage from Bede's Ecclesiastical History there is a description of the custom of passing around the harp at social gatherings[11].

When the Normans conquered England in 1066 they brought their cultural traditions with them, with the result that, earliest narrative verse after the Conquest shows obvious signs of both English and Norman influence. Poems like the Brut, for example, though primarily Old English in character, show unmistakable traces of the French syllabic line. As there is no extant music for these poems it is difficult to prove that they were performed orally. It is known, however, that the long French narrative poems (the chansons de geste) were always sung[12] and that the old Saxon lays were chanted or recited to the accompaniment of the

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[11] One of the many references in which this quotation appears is Bruce Pattison's Music and poetry of the English Renaissance, London, Methuen, 1948, p. 23. For original v. the Old English version, ed., T. Miller, London, K. Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., E.E.T.S. (Original Series), 1890, (Part I), No. 95. 96, iv, 24, p. 342.

[12] "Taillefer, William's minstrel is said to have encouraged the troops at the battle of Hastings by singing a song of Roland. The chansons de geste, of which the Song of Roland is one, were always sung". Pattison, op. cit., p. 24. Further proof is supplied by Johannes de Grocheo, who, writing in 1300 about the method of performance of Le Gieus de Robin et de Marion, states that the chanson de geste is "made up of a number of lines with the same rhyme, each of which is to be sung to the same tune." New Oxford history of music, ed., Dom. A. Hughes, Oxford University Press, 1954, vol. 2, p. 223.

harp. Since both these traditions had considerable
influence on poetry after the Conquest, would they not
also affect the method of performance?

Like the early verse chronicles the long narrative
poems of the Middle English period have no extant music.
On the other hand, as many of the poems were divided into
"fits", there is a possibility that these breaks in
continuity might suggest an oral presentation for they could
indicate a place where the performer rested, supplied
instrumental music for the audience's entertainment, or
began a fresh melody. Of course such evidence does not
give conclusive proof that the poems of this period were
sung. Is it likely, however, that British poets, who had
a long tradition of singing behind them, from both the
Saxons and the French, would ignore their training and
deliberately choose forms that were alien to them? Then, too,
why is it that poems of a later date (about the thirteenth
century) begin with words like "listen lordings", if the
poems were not intended to be performed orally?

Possibly the chant-fable, part prose and part verse,
like Aucassin et Nicolette, may represent the transition
from an all-singing to an all-speaking manner of presentation[13].
At any rate, it is certain, in the fourteenth century,

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[13] Pattison, op. cit., p. 27.

romances were often recited, for Langland in his <u>Piers Plowman</u> states that there were "...iaperes and iogeloures and iangelers of gestes[14]" and Chaucer, in the <u>House of Fame</u>[15], devotes a long passage to the description of "mynstralles" (those that played an instrument) and "gestiours" (those that wrote and told tales).

The medieval lyric (which owed its genesis largely to the troubadours of Provence) kept its music much longer than narrative verse. Although England does not seem to have been influenced by the troubadours to the same extent as France or Italy, after 1150 (when Eleanor became queen of England) many troubadour characteristics became apparent in the metrical forms of the English lyric. Moreover, like the troubadours on the continent, their English imitators expected their poems to be sung. This fact is made clear by the London Guildhall records of the thirteenth century, where, in the plans for the celebration of the Puy[16], the regulations specify that

> E qe il ieit a les chauncouns juger eslu(ii) ou (iii) qi se conoisent en chaunt et en musike, pur les notes et les poinz del chaunt trier et examiner, auxi bien com la nature de la reson enditee. Kar saunz le chaunt ne doit on nie appeler une resoun endite chauncoun, ne chauncoun reale corounee ne doit estre saunz doucour de melodies chaunte[17].

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[14] Langland, W., <u>Piers Plowman</u>, ed., W. Skeat, London, K. Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., E.E.T.S. (Original Series) 1898, B. text, No. 28. 38, Passus 10, 1. 31.

[15] Bk. 3, 11. 1193-1519.

[16] Puy Notre Dame (near Saumur) had founded a sort of troubadour academy in the twelfth century. It was widely copied elsewhere, giving its name to similar institutions whose primary purpose was to hear songs and to honour the best of them.

[17] Quoted by Pattison, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 29.
And that he, who is familiar with chant and

Further indication that the English medieval lyric
was intended to be sung is supplied by the fact that
fourteen of the ninety-one extant thirteenth century lyrics
were accompanied by musical notation.

By the fourteenth century the lyric was still an
elegant social form of art and still sung, for song played
an important role in the stylized conventions of courtly
love. According to these traditions[18] every young gallant
was expected to immortalize his mistress in songs of his own
making. In the Legend of Good Women, for example, Chaucer
states that he is going to

> ... seyn, as thynketh me,
> This song in preysyng of this lady fre[19].

while in the Complaint D'Amours he indicates that he is
going to make the song:

> This compleynte on seint Valentynes day,
> Whan every foughel chesen shal his make,
> To hir, whos I am hool, and shal alwey,
> This woful song and this compleynte I make,
> That never yit wolde me to mercy take[20].

music, was directed to judge two or three chosen songs in order
to sort out and examine the notes and points of the song, as
well as the nature of the spoken sound. For without the chant
neither must one call the spoken word song, nor must the prize
winning song be without the sweetness of sung melodies.

[18] For an extended discussion of courtly love v.
J. F. Rowthbothan's Troubadours and courts of love, London,
Swann Sonnenschein and Co., 1895.

[19] The Poems of Chaucer, ed., F. N. Robinson, Boston,
Houghton Mifflin Co., 1933, F text. ll. 247-248. All Chaucer
quotations are from this edition.

[20] The authorship of this poem is doubtful but it is
attributed to Chaucer in Robinson, op. cit., p. 637, ll. 85-88.

The suggestion that the lover made both the words
and the music is in keeping with the early tradition that
poet and musician were the same person.

In Celtic days these musician-poets were called
bards, while in the Anglo-Saxon period they were known as
scops or gleemen[21]. From Widsith's account of the duties of
a scop (in the final lines of his poem) it is evident that
the scop (or gleeman) was expected, not only to recite or
chant the traditional songs, but to compose, more or less
extemporaneously, poems on new subjects.

> Swā scriþende gesceapum hweorfaᵈ.
> glēomen gumena geond grunda fela,
> þearfe secgaᵈ, þoncword sprecaþ,
> simle suᵈ oþþe norᵈ sumne gemētaᵈ
> gydda gleawne, geofum unhnēawne,
> sē þe fore duguþe wile dōm āræeran
> eorlscipe aefnan, oþ þaet eal scaeceᵈ,
> lēoht and līf somod; lof sē gewyrceᵈ,
> hafaᵈ under heofonum hēahfaestne dōm[22].

About the eighth century, a different kind of
musician made an appearance. These entertainers were seldom
composers, but were poor vagabonds who sang songs that others
wrote, and performed tricks with trained bears or any other

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[21] These were terms for professional entertainers.
The terminology is not at all clear but G. Reese thinks that
"the scops were resident in the hall of an atheling..., while
the gleemen travelled about". Music in the Middle Ages, p. 240.

[22] Widsith, op. cit., p. 5, ll. 135-140.
Thus wandering, they who shape songs for men
Pass over many lands, and tell their need,
And speak their thanks, and ever, south or north,
Meet some one skilled in songs and free in gifts,
Who would be raised among his friends to fame.
Transl. found in A. S. Cook and C. B. Tinker's,
Select translations from Old English poetry, ll. 135-139.

collaborator which might be at hand. With these performers
the concept of musician-poet descended in dignity and came
to be synonymous with merely light, professional entertainment.
Out of this tradition came such terms as _jongleur_ and juggler.

By the tenth century, a division of the entertainers
into the play-acting, tumbling, conjuring _jongleur_ (who was
frequently condemned by the church and classed with epileptics,
magicians, and prostitutes[23]) and the _jongleur de geste_
(the entertainer who recited the long, traditional or original,
narrative poems recounting the deeds of national heroes,
like the scops of old) was clearly discernible. The difference
of social grade was marked by the introduction of a new term
for the higher-class public entertainer, the musician class,
that of _ménestrier_ (akin to minister). Soon, _ménestral_[24]
or minstrel grew out of the latter word.

Necessarily wide differences of social importance
existed even among the minstrels. There were humble wanderers,
but also, there were those who approached their work seriously
and were sufficiently talented and cultured to perform in
good society. If one of these was fortunate he gave up his
wandering for a position in a feudal household; if not, he

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[23] Salisbury, John of, _Policraticus_, ed., C.C.J. Webb,
Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1909, Bk. VIII, ch. 13, p. 765b.

[24] The words "mynestres" and "mynstrales" were both
used in _Piers Plowman_, ed., W. Skeat, London, Trübner and Co.,
E.E.T.S., (Original Series), 1898, C text, No. 54, Passus VI,
1.60 and Passus III, 1.237.

travelled from court to court giving selections from his repertoire.

In the eleventh century there appeared on the continent a group of poet-musicians known as troubadours and trouvères. They were not wanderers but were often persons of rank who composed for their own circle of friends. The distinction between them was one of locality and language: the troubadours who flourished in Provence in southern France from the end of the eleventh century to the end of the thirteenth, used the langue d'oc, while the trouvères, located in northern France, employed the langue d'oil.

The art of the troubadour is said to have been introduced into England when Eleanor of Aquitaine married Henry II. She had patronized the troubadours in Aquitaine and Northern France (Bernart de Ventadorn, who she took to Paris and possibly to England, had addressed to her many of his best songs) and she encouraged the poets of her new country to emulate their Provençal colleagues.

As Henry's court was the most brilliant in Europe it was the constant resort of troubadours from the continent. Among those to cross the channel were Bertrand de Born and possibly Chrétien de Troyes. The most famous of the English trouvères was Richard the Lion-Hearted, who has left us two examples of his work: a sirvente and an

exhortation to the Dauphin of Auvergne to join Richard's alliance[25].

These courtly minstrels composed their own words and music but did not always perform their own works[26]. The maker of the words of a poem, then, had done only half his task until he had wedded a tune to his words. Some troubadours are spoken of as making good words and poor tunes, and _vice versa_, but the significant fact is that they all had to provide _both_.

Although the musician-poet was still in existence in the fourteenth century the development of polyphony, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, made it more difficult for an amateur to set his own verses to music. He found that the polyphonic concept of music (more than one melody at a time) required new skills and specialized training. Thus, as we shall see, the _ars nova_ brought about the separation of music and poetry and ushered in a new era of specialization which resulted in the formation of a separate musical profession. As yet, there was no real literary profession. True, there were isolated men of letters who were protected by patronage, but poetry was still mainly in the hands of men who had other means of livelihood.

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[25] Rowthbothan, J. F., _Troubadours and courts of love_, p. 62.

[26] This occupation they left to the humble professionals.

If it should be asked, "What was the nature of medieval music that it could so wed itself to a text that neither the words nor the music was complete in itself?" it would be difficult to make an adequate answer, for, owing to the inadequacies of early notation systems, there is very little extant music. Nevertheless, it has been possible to gain some knowledge of its character from a study of the existing manuscripts and treatises of the period.

Medieval monody consisted of a single melodic line[1] which was very different from our modern melodies as many of the features necessary to modern composition (like time, key, and harmony) had not yet been discovered. Of course, rhythm has always been present in music (it seems to be one of the first instincts of human beings) but rhythm and time are not the same thing. For example, in the following rhythm
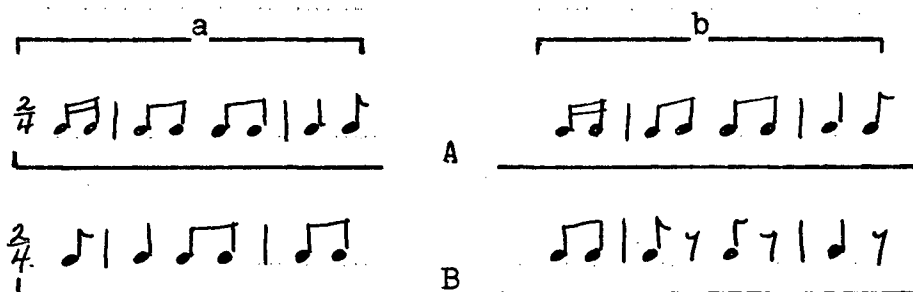
the segments bracketed "a" and "b" are in the same rhythm

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[1] This type of music is known as Monody.

and time, but the larger phrases marked "A" and "B" are in quite different rhythms although they are in the same time (that is, they take an equal time to play and are divided into bars of equal length with accents falling regularly at the beginning of each measure). As time signatures were non-existent in the Middle Ages composers followed the rhythm of the text to give shape to their melodies. Indeed, the power of joining many rhythms together by making them conform to one time is almost a new development, if one takes into consideration the number of years that man has made music.

Today when a tune is played or sung, people with an ear for music can quite easily hear simple chords to go with the melody, suggesting that it is in a certain key. In the Middle Ages, however, even talented composers, like Adam de la Halle, would have had difficulty thinking of the simplest chords, for they thought, not in harmonies, but in a melodic line which was written to conform to certain modes. These modes are not keys. The difference between one mode and another is not the kind of difference which exists between C major and D major, but rather that which exists between C major and C minor (that is, a difference of the arrangement of tones and semitones and hence, necessarily, of the width of some of the other intervals). What the four Authentic modes of St.

Ambrose[2] sounded like may be heard by playing on the pianoforte octave scales of white notes beginning on D,E,F,G. Since the fifth and first notes were fundamental intervals[3] it seemed natural, when there was a passage to be chanted, that the fifth of the mode was used for the reciting note and the first of the mode for a dropping of the voice, or cadence.

To the four Authentic modes were added another set of four (called by St. Gregory[4] the Plagal modes). Each

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[2] The modes received their name from St. Ambrose (340-397), Bishop of Milan, because, in the course of his reform of the ritual of the church, he fixed upon these four to be used in his music. His ritual is still employed in the archdiocese of Milan. G. Reese, Music in the Middle Ages, p. 104ff.

[3] The Greek philosopher, Pythagoras, and his pupils found that a definite numerical relationship existed between the notes of the scale. They found that, by keeping the tension constant, and varying the ratio of the length of the strings, they could produce various intervals: thus, the ratio of 2:1 gave the octave, 3:2 the fifth, and 4:3 the fourth. As a result, the Greeks attached special importance to these intervals (the "perfect" intervals of modern harmony). Medieval theorists, copying the Greeks, also regarded these as important intervals. Moreover, they used the existing Greek terms for their octave species: for example, diatessaron-the interval of a fourth, diapente-that of a fifth, and diapason-an octave. Macrobius, Commentary, on the dream of Scipio, transl. W. H. Stahl, New York, Columbia University Press, 1952, p. 187ff.

[4] Gregory I (540-604) became Pope in 590. He founded, or reorganized the Schola Cantorum and compiled the Roman Antiphony. Universal Standard encyclopedia, ed., Morse, J. L., New York, Unicorn Publishers, 1955, vol. 11, p. 4011.

Plagal mode was simply a new form of a corresponding Authentic mode. It was the same mode taken in another compass so as to lie between its former dominant and dominant (with the final in the middle). A piece in the Plagal mode would come to a close on the same final as a piece in the corresponding Authentic mode, but its range would be different. In order that the reciting note would not be at the bottom or top of the compass a new one was appointed, three notes below the old one. The whole series of modes may now be set forth as follows:

Mode	Compass	Dominant of the Mode	Name of the Mode
I	D - D^5	(D) A^6	Dorian
II	A - A	F	Hypodorian
III	E - E	(B) C	Phrygian
IV	B - B	(D) A	Hypophrygian
V	F - F	C	Lydian
VI	C - C	(D) A	Hypolydian
VII	G - G	D	Mixolydian
VIII	D - D	C	Hypomixolydian

[5] In looking at this diagram it should be clearly understood that modes are not a question of _pitch_. Any mode (whilst preserving the order of tones and semitones which give it its individual character) can be taken at any pitch. It is usual, however, to show the modes at what we might call their original pitches.

[6] D was the original dominant of modes I, IV, and VI, but later it was changed to A; likewise, the B of mode III was changed to C. To avoid the interval of the augmented fourth (F-B) the B was often flattened, giving a new note. The B was not always shown in the notation as flattened, but singers were taught to introduce the ♭ on suitable occasions. When more and more accidentals (like F#, E♭, and G#) were added, the old modal systems began to break up and our modern scale system came into use. Part of this diagram may be found in New Oxford history of music, ed., Dom. A. Hughes, Oxford University Press, 1954, vol. 2, pp. 111-112.

The names of the modes were those of the ancient Greek scales[7a]. Unfortunately, the medieval theorists employed the old terms without understanding the Greek scale system; as a result, the nomenclature was entirely incorrect.

Nine hundred and fifty years after Gregory a Swiss monk, Henry of Glareanus, a friend of Erasmus, was studying and writing about music. He brought forth the theory (in his _Dodecachordon_) that there should be twelve not eight modes, adding a mode on A (the Aeolian) with its plagal and one on C (the Ionian) with its plagal, four new ones in all[7b]. To some extent these new modes already existed, for composers had gone ahead of theory, but the plainsong of the Church was, and still is, restricted to the eight modes of Gregory.

[7a] There seems to be some doubt as to the origin of the names Dorian, Phrygian _et cetera_. Most musicologists hold the view that the names are closely allied to the Greek theory of _ethos_. It is interesting to note, however, that these names all represent ancient peoples. If we accept the theory that music began with singing and that all early melodies followed the inflexions of speech, is it not possible that these modes originally were developed from the speech inflexions of the district from which they took their name? To take a modern example, in the Chinese language the meaning of individual words is affected by the intonation, so that adult foreigners have difficulty in learning the language unless possessed of a quick ear. Since the characteristic idioms and intonations of their speech may be reduced to scales, is it not possible that the ultimate origin for any scale system may be found in the nation's speech inflexions? The idea for this hypothesis was given me by Curt Sachs' remark "music... descended from spoken language" in _The rise of music in the ancient world_, _op. cit._, p. 19.

[7b] Miller, H. M., _An outline history of music_, New York, Barnes and Noble Inc., 1947, p. 38.

Although monody was not confined to any one class of musician, it was religious monody (referred to variously as plainsong, plain chant, Gregorian chant, and cantus planus) which had the most extensive repertoire and the greatest influence on later musical developments.

The term plainsong[8] was applied to the large body of traditional ritual melody of the Western Christian Church. It was a translation of cantus planus in contradistinction to cantus figuratus (florid song, implying counterpoint added to the traditional melody) or cantus mensuratus (measured song implying the regularity of rhythm associated with harmonic music). The term "plain", then, may be taken in the literal sense of unadorned, and as obviously dating from the period when harmonic accompaniment to the Church's ritual music was beginning so that a distinction had become necessary.

The history of plainsong is of the highest interest. From Saint John Chrysostom we get some insight into the reason why music was introduced into the service.

> When God saw that many men were lazy,
> and gave themselves only with difficulty
> to spiritual reading, He wished to
> make it easy for them, and added the
> melody to the Prophet's words, that

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[8] The general characteristics of plainsong are: it is monodic, modal, unaccompanied, nonmetric, and uses a free prose rhythm following that of the text, which is in Latin.

all being rejoiced by the charm of the
music, should sing hymns to Him with
gladness[9].

As might be expected, all Churchmen did not approve of
the introduction of music into the ecclesiastical ritual. True,
there were a few, like Saint Augustine, who felt that music had
a magic power capable of establishing relations with the Divine.

How greatly did I weep in Thy hymns and
canticles, deeply moved by the voices of
Thy sweet-speaking church! The voices
flowed into mine ears, and the truth was
poured forth into my heart, whence the
agitation of my piety overflowed, and
my tears ran over, and blessed was I
therein[10].

Many, however, agreed with the Egyptian Abbot Pambo who
"deplored" the use of music in the service.

Woe is upon us, O son, for the days are
come in which monks shall relinquish the
wholesome food given by the Holy Ghost,
and seek after words and tunes. What
repentance, what tears proceed from hymns?
What repentance can there be in a monk who,
whether situated in the church or in his cell,
lifts up his voice like a bull[11]?

[9] English translation in G. Reese, Music in the Middle
Ages, p. 65. For original v. Patrologiae cursus completus
(Series Graeca) ed., J. P. Migne, Paris, Garnier Frères,
1857-1866, vol. 55, p. 156. St. John Chrysostom (345-407),
was a famous Greek Father who became bishop of Constantinople.

[10] English translation of the Confessions in Nicene
and Post's A select library of the Nicene Fathers of the
Christian church, ed., Schaff, Philip et al., New York,
C. Scribner's Sons, (Series I), 1886, vol. 1, p. 769. Quoted
by G. Reese in Music of the Middle Ages, p. 64.

[11] English translation in G. Reese's Music of the
Middle Ages, p. 66. For original v. M. Gerbert's Scriptores
ecclesiastici, de musica, St. Blaise, 1784, vol. 1, p. 3.

Vocal execution, then, was early introduced into
the service. As near as we can judge it was applied in
three main directions: in the solemn reading of portions
of the Gospels for which cantillation was used in accordance
with established formulas; in psalm and hymn singing which
ranged from cantillation to full-fledged song; and in
ecstatic chanting of the single word Alleluia to colourful
passages (this was probably derived from the liturgy of
the Synagogue). At the end of the Alleluia, flourishes,
known as the _jubilus_, were added to give variety to the
service and expression to the emotions. Moreover, many
practices from pre-Christian cultures were introduced at
various times, as, for example, the Syrian use of Antiphonal
and Responsorial chant.

There seems to have been no definite form for the
service until the end of the fourth century when Ambrose,
Bishop of Milan, made the first important effort to stabilize
the Roman service. He recognized Latin as the official
language of the Liturgy and fixed upon four modes to be
used in the development of the ritual. Moreover, he is
considered to be the father of hymnody in the Western Church.
It is said that he introduced the hymns to "buoy up the
spirits of his Catholic adherents" during their "fierce
struggle with the Empress Justina and her /Arian7 followers."

> ...At this time it was instituted that,
> after the manner of the Eastern Church,
> hymns and psalms should be sung, lest

> the people should pine away in the
> tediousness of sorrow; which custom,
> retained from then till now, is
> imitated by many, yea, by almost all
> of Thy congregations throughout the
> rest of the world[12].

At the end of the sixth century Pope Gregory
is said to have taken the whole subject under review again.
It is not known exactly what the nature of Gregory's
reform was, however: in view of the tendency of medieval
musical expression to progress from a stage of fluidity to
one of stability it may be that his reform consisted to
some extent in definitely associating particular melodic
outlines with particular texts. As many of the chants
were Hebrew in origin, it is possible that previously the
Christians followed the Hebrew practice of using fluid
melodic formulae that could be adapted to texts with
varying number of syllables.

The introduction of the authorized plainsong into
England took place in the time of Pope Gregory. Augustine,
whom he sent to convert King Egbert and his subjects
(597 A.D.), approached the king in the Isle of Thanet
singing a piece of plainsong. Later, Augustine was
created the first Archbishop of Canterbury.

Canterbury, the court of Egbert, and the See of

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[12] English translation of Augustine's _Confessions_,
in Nicene and Post _op. cit._, p. 134. For original v.
Patrologia (Series Latina), vol. 32, p. 770. Quoted by
G. Reese in _Music in the Middle Ages_, p. 104.

Augustine quickly became centres for the study of Gregorian plainsong. The Abbey of Wearmouth in Northumberland became another great centre when Benedict Biscop (628-690), its founder and a great traveller, brought John, Archcantor of Saint Peter's, from Rome to train the singers of the abbey in the practice of the Gregorian chant[13a].

At the time of the Norman Conquest attempts were made to introduce the French manner of singing. In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (the Peterborough-Canterbury or "E" manuscript, which is very outspoken about Norman misdeeds) it is stated that in 1083 Abbot Thurston of Glastonbury stationed Norman archers in the clerestory and when rebellious monks persisted in singing in the way which they regarded as native and authentic, they were shot as they sang the holy office[13b].

The simplest form of plainsong began, one may suppose, from the natural tendency of a reader or speaker (especially in a large building) to utter his words on one note with some dropping of the voice at the end of the sentence or verse. Thus, plainsong rhythm was the "free" rhythm of speech, its irregular rhythm arising from the unmetrical character of the words to be recited -- psalms,

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[13a] Winfred, D., Church music in history and practice, New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 1937, p. 30.

[13b] Ibid., p. 32.

prayers, and the like. As a result, plainsong melody was written to conform to the accents of the Latin text, melodic peaks coinciding with the most important accent of the words. Usually the accented syllable of each word was set to a higher note than the one that preceded it, following the speech-habit of slightly raising the pitch of the voice for an important syllable. Likewise, the musical period of the Gregorian chant adopted the natural tendency of speech to rise to its reciting note at the beginning and drop from it at the end of the phrase; that is, it is constructed like an arch with the phraseological accent at the peak. Sometimes, however, this law of accent must yield to the superior aesthetic laws of musical phrasing, modality, and rhythm[14].

There were three styles of text setting[15]: in the

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[14] Gregorian composers quite often placed the phrase-ological accent at the height of a musical phrase without detriment to the tonic accent of single words. Sometimes, however, in an ascending progression in a melodic phrase the final syllable of a given word was placed higher than the accented syllable, thus disturbing the tonic accent for aesthetic purposes.

[15] The place in the liturgy and the ability of the performers were the determining factors in the choice of style. For example, the chants used for ordinary (Ferial) days were much shorter and simpler than those used on Holy Days. Furthermore, those sung by the trained singers of the Schola and Choir offered more scope than those sung by the attendants surrounding the Bishop and the people of the congregation.

first, or syllabic style, each syllable of the text was
set to one note of the melody;

Gló- ri- a in ex- cél- sis De- o [16].

in the second, or neumatic style, although some of the syllables
had one note, most had two or even three groups of notes;

chanter   chorus

Ré - qui- em ae - tér - - - nam dó - na(etc.)[17]
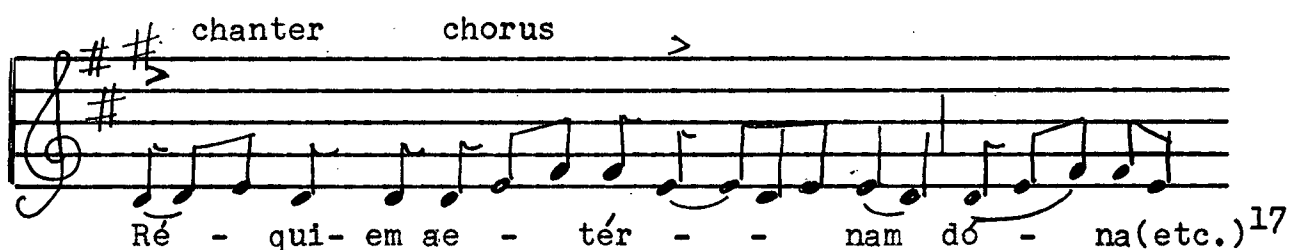
finally, in the florid or melismatic style, a single syllable
was set to many groups of notes, as in the Gradual and Alleluia.

Ky- ri - e   e - lé - i - son[18].

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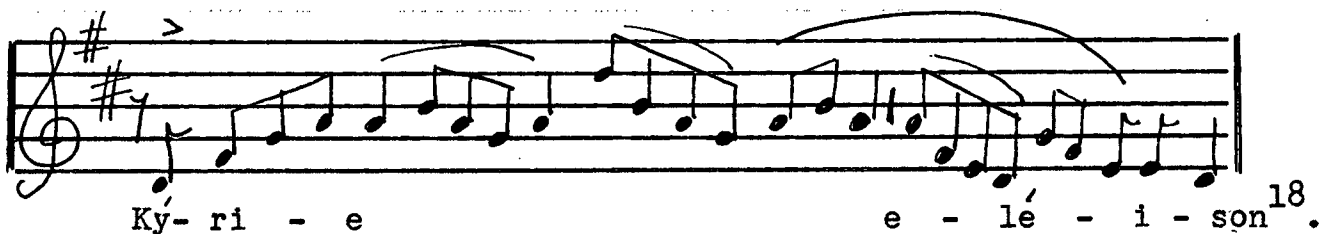
[16] "Gloria", Missa, De Angelis , Gregorian Chant
Publications (Series I) Boston, McLaughlin and Reilly Co.,
1906, p. 5.

[17] "Introitus", Missa pro Defunctus (Vatican version),
Boston, McLaughlin and Reilly Co., 1907, p. 1.

[18] "Kyrie", Missa De Angelis , op. cit., p. 4.

The four main classifications of chants are
grouped according to their melodic and textual structure[19].
To the first group, known as strophic compositions,
belong hymns and sequences. In the conventional hymn
there are a number of metrical[20] stanzas each of which
has the same literary structure. Whereas all the lines
within a single stanza are not necessarily identical
in rhythm and meter, the first line of one stanza will
have the same rhythm and meter as the first line of the
next stanza (and so on throughout the hymn). As a result,
the melody of the first strophe can be repeated for all
other strophes. In the following example by Saint
Ambrose the lively tune (which is through-composed)
matches the strongly marked rhythm of the words.
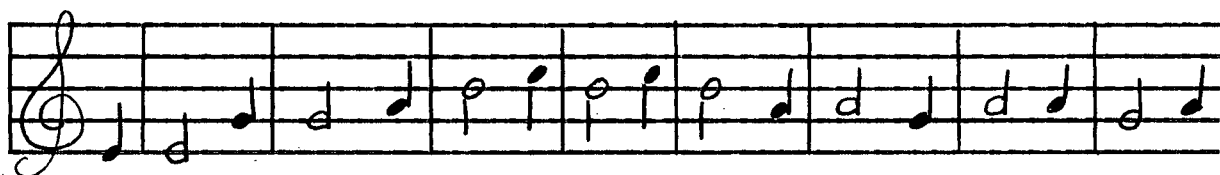
Ae-ter-na Chri-sti mu-ne-ra et mar-ty-rum vic-to- ri -as lau-

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[19] New Oxford history of music, vol. 2, p. 112ff.

[20] Originally the hymns were governed by the laws of
quantity not word accent, as in the following example:
Hymnum dicat turba fratrum, hymnum cantus personet,
Christo regi concinnantes laudes demus debitas.
tu Dei de corde Verbum, tu uia, tu ueritas,
Iesse uirga tu uocaris, te leonem legimus.
Later the hymns incorporated material from folk melody and based
their texts on word accent.
Veni creator Spiritus
mentes tuorum uisita
imple superna gratia
quae tu creasti pectora:
Both these examples come from A. S. Walpole, ed., Early Latin
hymns, Cambridge University Press, 1922, pp. 5 and 374.
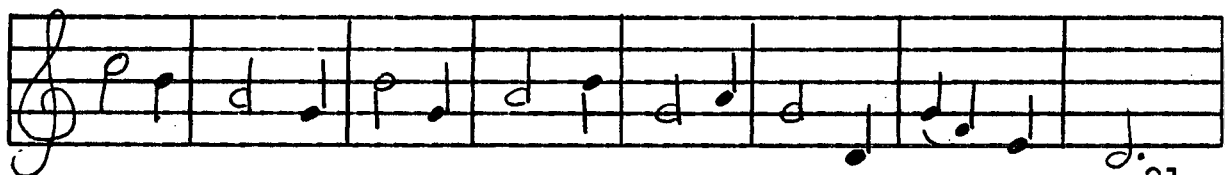
des fe-ren-tes de-bi-tas lae-tis ca-na-mus men-ti- bus[21].

A special kind of hymn, the processional hymn, was distinguished by a refrain that was sung by the people[22] at the beginning and after every stanza of the hymn. An example of this type of hymn is Theodulph of Orleans' Gloria, laus, et honor tibi sit, Rex Christe, redemptor, which is still sung as the processional "All glory, laud, and honour" on Palm Sunday.

The sequence is a little different from the hymn in that every two consecutive lines follow the same melodic pattern. In this form and in the hymn the melody takes absolute predominance over the text on which it imposes its own musical accentuation.

The second type, known as psalmodic plainsong, makes up the majority of the chants of the Mass and Office, their texts being drawn from the one hundred and fifty Psalms and the Canticles of the Old and New Testaments. The character of the psalmodic plainsong is best seen in

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[21] Apel, W., and Davison, A. T., Anthology of music, Harvard University Press, 1905 (revised edition), vol. 1, No. 9b2.

[22] Since the hymns came from the people they were not incorporated into the service until the ninth century.

the familiar psalm tone. Usually, there will be found an
opening note or two (intonation), leading to a monotone
(the reciting note) which is retained for some time and
then merges into a cadence (mediation), whereupon, the
monotone is resumed and another cadence (called the ending)
closes the verse. The intonation is, in the Psalms, used
for the first verse only.

Intonation   Recitation   Mediation

Recitation   Ending
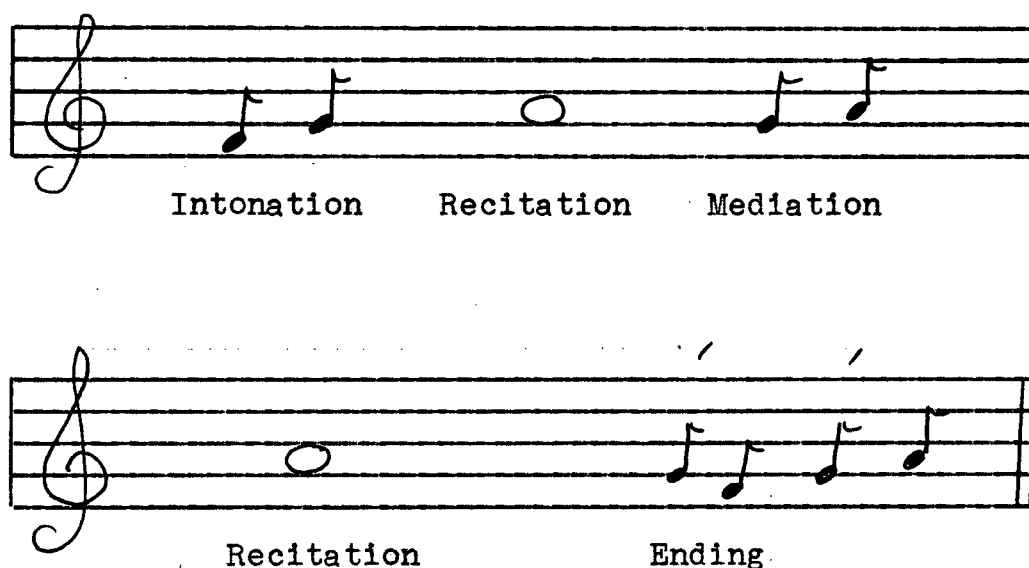
Many pieces of psalmodic plainsong that are not marked by
the comparative simplicity just described will be found on
examination to circle round or touch frequently upon one
special note (clearly the original reciting note), and then
to drop to a cadence in some sort of florid figure. Such a
figure is called a melisma.

The psalm-text consists of a series of unrhymed,
non-metrical, double-verses. These double-verses (which
usually balance each other in thought and structure) are

generally sung in alternation either by priest and choir (<u>responsorial</u> psalmody) or by two sides of the choir (<u>antiphonal</u> psalmody). The psalms can be sung directly, however, in which case the priest recites the psalm to one of the eight "psalm tones" which provide for every double-verse of the text a similar melody. In this type the choir usually sings a choral antiphon directly before and after the chanting of the priest. The following is a setting of psalm 146 with antiphon.
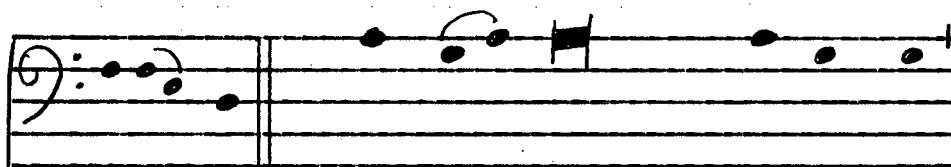
Lauda - bo 1. Lau -da anima mea Do- mi- num,

laudabo Dominum in vi- ta- me- a:
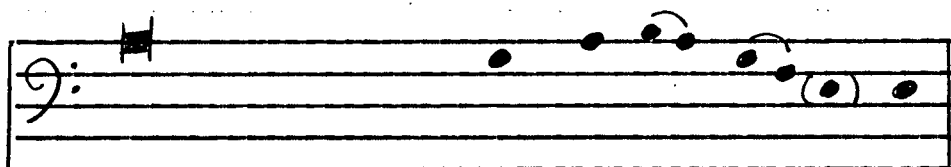
psallam Domino meo quam- di- u fu- e- ro.

Antiphon

Lau-da- bo De- um me- um in vi- ta me- a [23].

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[23] Apel and Davison, <u>op. cit</u>., No. 11.

In the third style there are no stanzas, but sections of free composition in which every phrase of the text must have its own melodic pattern.

Finally, the fourth type consists of chants that resemble monologues and dialogues in character, the monologue being sung by the celebrant and the dialogue by the celebrant and congregation or choir.

The repertory of plainsong is very large. The round of daily services includes[24]:

1) The florid and beautiful chants of the Proper of the Mass, Introit, Communion, Gradual, Alleluia, and Offertory, the texts of which varied from day to day according to the season of the saint.

2) The settings of the Ordinary of the Mass, the texts of which did not vary. The following five passages, the _Kyrie, Gloria in excelsis, Credo, Sanctus,_ and _Agnus Dei,_ are of later origin than the psalmodic melodies and recitations[25].

3) The _Antiphons_ for the Psalms and Canticles also the _Responds_ of the Breviary.

4) The hymns from the same book.

5) The "eight tones" to which the Psalms and Canticles are sung.

6) The Preface tone.

7) All other chants that are needed to complete the service; for example, the _Magnificat_ and the _Te Deum._ The _Magnificat_ is the hymn of the

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[24] These are the chants which are used in the Roman Catholic church today.

[25] These are the congregational parts of the service.

Virgin Mary as given in the gospel of Saint Luke I 46:55. It forms part of the text of the service of Vespers in the Roman Catholic Church and is intoned to the "tone" of the Proper Anthem of the day. The <u>Te Deum</u>, which, like the Magnificat, has a prose text, finds a place in the liturgy of the church as the outpouring of praise at the moments of climax during the service of Matins on the occasion of festivals.

These chants form the musical settings for the various services of the liturgical year. The main chants sung in the Offices are usually the psalms, hymns, and special hymns like the <u>Te Deum</u> and <u>Magnificat</u> while the Mass, which is the central ceremony of the Roman Catholic church, consists of the chants of the Proper and Ordinary of the Mass.

The text of the Mass has two main divisions, with six subdivisions (or two acts with six scenes). Its usual disposition is as follows:

A First main division of the Mass.
  I Preparation
    1) Introit   This chant usually consists of an antiphon with one verse of a psalm and the Gloria Patri. It is sung at High Mass while the celebrant recites the preparatory prayers at the foot of the altar steps, or said at Low Mass by the Priest after these prayers.

    2) Kyrie   The <u>Kyrie</u> followed by <u>Christe elieson</u> are each repeated three times to the same melody whereupon the Kyrie is again repeated, twice to the first melody and once to a new melismatic chant.

    3) Gloria in excelsis   The Priest begins the chant which is then taken up by the choir or it can be sung by the

congregation. The Priest's words are syllabic while the rest of the chant is neumatic.

II Instruction
    1)   Collect

Read by the Priest. At a High Mass, the choir or congregation, or at a Low Mass, the Server, answers with the Amen.

    2)   Epistle

Either sung or read by the Subdeacon at High Mass or by the Priest at Low Mass.

    3)   Gradual

This chant also can be sung or read. When it is sung the soloist stands on the step (gradus) whence the Lesson is to be read. At Easter it is replaced by the Alleluia.

    4)   Alleluia

A Respond on the word Alleluia sung by soloist and repeated by choir. It is extended by a long jubilus on the final "a". At solemn occasions this is replaced by the Tract.

    5)   Gospel

Recited by the Priest.

    6)   Credo

A syllabic chant which is rendered on Sundays and certain feasts.

B   Second Main division of the Mass.
   I Offertory
     1)   Sequence
     2)   Offertory

A chant (usually neumatic) which is heard as the wafer is being prepared.

   II Consecration
     1)   Preface

These words are intoned by the Priest and lead directly into the

     2)   Sanctus

Sung antiphonally between the Servers and the Choir. It is followed immediately by the

     3)   Benedictus

III Communion
    1)   Lord's Prayer   Usually syllabic in style.

    2)   Agnus Dei   Repeated three times; on the third repetition the melody is extended by a short coda to provide a suitable conclusion.

IV Thanksgiving
    1)   Communion antiphon

    2)   Ite Missa Est   Short melismatic passage sung by the Priest[26].

Though most of the medieval music set to Latin texts belonged to the ritual of the church, there existed a large body of Latin songs that were non-liturgical in character.

From the eleventh to the thirteenth century the term _conductus_ was applied to some of these Latin songs. Originally a trope used as an introduction to a liturgical ceremony, the _conductus_ gradually came to be known as a song, with text in verse form, employed as a transition to a particular function. By the twelfth century it seemed to have lost its original meaning, for the texts could be religious or secular, grave or gay, while the music included forms that ranged from simplest hymn strophes to elaborate patterns[27].

As the Church was, without exception, the greatest

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[26] This list was made from my knowledge of the Roman Service and from a study of two masses, _Missa pro Defunctus_, and _Missa De Angelis_, _op. cit._

[27] _New Oxford history of music_, p. 172.

single force in the medieval world, it is not surprising
to find that her music greatly influenced the secular
music and literature of the period. From the simple music
of the people to the sophisticated art of the troubadours
and trouvères there is unmistakable evidence of church
inspiration.

Although a music of the people existed side by side
with that of the church in medieval England, the popular
music did not fare as well as the sacred repertoire, for
it did not have custodians, like the great choirs at Rome,
Rouen, Metz, and Salisbury, to preserve it for posterity.
Popular literature was kept largely in the memory of the
people, who learned it by rote and then passed it on in a
similar fashion. In transmitting the songs from mouth to
mouth, lay singers undoubtedly felt free to change the
melodies as they wished, and even to elaborate on them;
as a result, it is almost impossible today to determine just
what constituted the original song. Indeed, if it had
not been for the goliards[28] the popular songs of the Middle
Ages might have been irretrievably lost.

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[28] From the last half of the tenth to the thirteenth
century vagrant students and men in minor ecclesiastical
orders, known as goliards, roamed over Europe composing
and singing songs on various subjects. Since these men
possessed a certain amount of education they noted down
some of their songs, with the result that their songs
constitute the richest field for the study of the popular
music of the Middle Ages. Oxford History of music,
ed., P. C. Buck, Oxford University Press, 1929, p. 200.

From the few examples that have been preserved
it has been possible to establish the fact that medieval
folksong tunes have many characteristics in common with
ecclesiastical plainsong. They are, for example, frequently
in the old modes (the Dorian and Mixolydian being common
in England); the rhythms are often free, so that, when
they are notated by modern scholars, measures of unequal
value have to be employed; moreover, their tunes are
purely monodic, there being very limited evidence of the
existence of any folk harmony[29].

In the eleventh century these two powerful
traditions (that of church and people) met in another form
of music which was heard in the court and castle.

The troubadour and trouvère both exercised the
same art, that of Poet-Composer. They developed the lyric
especially, the praise of women being their principal
subject. Every troubadour had his particular mistress to
whom he expressed an idealistic devotion. But he also
celebrated heroism, the greatness of princes, and national
pride, took sides in political disputes, and preached
crusades in song.

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[29] Giraldus Cambrensis alleges in his Descriptio
Kambriae, that singing in thirds (known as gymel) was
common in parts of Britain (but nowhere else in Europe) as
early as the tenth or eleventh century. Transl. Sir Richard
Colt Hoare for Everyman's Library, London, J. M. Dent and
Sons Ltd., 1935, p. 74ff. Moreover, there is a twelfth century
song from the Orkneys (in thirds) which is listed in Apel and
Davison, op. cit., No. 22b.

If troubadour songs are divided according to
subject the main types[30] are (1) chanso, a love song,
(2) sirvente, a satirical poem, (3) planh, a funeral song
on the death of a patron, (4) tenso, a dialogue or dispute,
(5) alba, a dawn song, the parting of lovers, ("the word
alba reappears as a refrain in each verse") (6) pastorela,
the heroine is always a shepherdess, (7) serena, a lover
longs for evening, to unite him with his beloved, (8) comjat,
the troubadour bids his lady farewell, (9) escondig, the
lover attempts to excuse his behaviour, and (10) ballata
and estampeda -- dance songs.

The text and melody were original except in the
case of the sirvente, where the poet replied to another
poem maintaining the same verse pattern and borrowing the
tune. The melody, when written at all, was placed at the
top of the page with the text of the first stanza written
below the notes. Subsequent stanzas, following without
music, were sung to the same melody.

Troubadour and trouvère songs have virtually the
same characteristics. They are notated on staves, but
few employ time values. That the melodies had a definite
measured music seems certain, for many are dancing songs
and would necessarily have to be performed with a regular
beat (possibly some form of triple meter). Since old

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[30] Chaytor, H. J., The troubadours, Cambridge
University Press, 1912, pp. 30-36.

French is accentual it is generally believed that the
music must have followed the stress of the words rather
than any fixed rhythmic pattern. This may account for
the fact that musicians did not feel the need to indicate
the time values in their notation.

Pour conforter ma pesance fais un son.

It is probable, too, that they employed retrograde analysis
in determining the mode, though the whole problem of
troubadour rhythm is still a question for discussion.

The influence of the church may be seen in the
troubadour forms of music, which, far from being primitive,
anticipate practically all later song forms. As there
was no sharp line of demarcation between sacred and secular
melodies it was not unusual to find a troubadour setting
his love songs to liturgical melodies. This adapting of
vernacular poems to melodies of Latin pieces was known
as contrafactum.

The musical forms used by the troubadours and
trouvères may be grouped in four main classes: those
deriving from the litany, the rondel, the sequence, and
the hymn[31].

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[31] An outline history of music, ed., H. M. Miller,
New York, Barnes and Noble Inc., 1947, pp. 12ff.

To the litany-type (that is, those songs which
repeated a melody over and over) belong the chanson de geste,
the strophic laisse, the rotrouenge, and the chanson avec
des refrains. The text of the chanson de geste (an epic
chronicle based on the adventures of heroes like Charlemagne
and Roland) was composed of a number of "unequal paragraph-
like sections called laisses" or tirades. As the lines
in these sections were usually of equal length throughout
and were not arranged into repeated stanza patterns or
strophes, it was simple to set the lines to a recurrent tune.
At the end of the laisse a cadential formula (ending in a
full close) was either sung or played on an instrument.
The following illustration is taken from Le Jeu de Robin et
de Marion by Adam de la Halle.

Au-di- gier, dist Raim-ber-ge, bouse vous di[32].

In the foregoing example each section consisted of a number
of lines of equal length which were sung to the same melody.

The strophic laisse (a short lyric form developed
from the chanson de geste) had a repeated melodic formula
with a divergent line as a conclusion or coda thus,

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[32] Gérold, T., La musique au Moyen Age, Paris,
Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1932, p. 82.

aaa.... b, while the rotrouenge had the same formula but repeated the divergent line (which may have been sung by the audience as a refrain).

Rotrouenge

1) Pour mon cuer re-   le- e- cier Vueil u-   ne   chan- çon
2) Chan-ter vous vueil sanz ten- cier D'u-   ne   mult de- bon
3) Que j'ai- me de   cuer en- tier Or   dont dex qu'il i

fe- re,   4) Cer-tes ja de li   a- mer ne se-   rai las
nai- re,   5) Se li cous de-viot a- voir brui-siez les bras
pai- re.
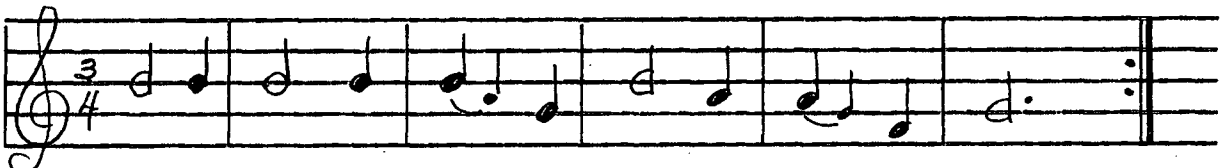
4) Car ele a   tres-tout mon cuer pris en sez laz. 33a.
5) Si a-vrai je de sa fa- me mez de   graz.

The chanson avec des refrains, as its name implies, had a number of refrains, a different one being sung after each stanza.

To the dance-type belong the rondeau, virelai, and ballade. Very often these forms were written for soloist

33a Apel and Davison, op. cit., No. 19h.

(possibly the leader of the dance) and chorus. The _rondeau_
set to a six-lined text had the musical pattern a A ab AB
while those with eight lines had the formula AB a A ab AB[33b],
that is, the refrain was repeated at the beginning and close
of the composition. Here is an example of this type.

Vos n'aler (Rondeau)   Guillaume d'Amiens

1,4,7 Vos n'a- ler mi-e si   com je faz   2,8 Ne vos, ne vos
3   Bele A-   a- liz par main se le-va   6 Bon jor ait ce-
5   Biau se ves-ti et mieuz se pa-ra

2,8 n'i sa- vez a- ler,   Ne vos, ne vos n'i sa-vez a- ler.
6   le que n'os no-mez So-vant m'i fait e- le sou- pi-rer. [34]

In the above illustration, stanzas 1, 4, and 7
constitute the "A" refrain while stanzas 2 and 8 are the
"B". If, however, the song retained the refrain at the beginning
and end (like the foregoing example) but employed a new melody
for each of its verses (however many there were) except the
last one (which anticipated the melody of the refrain) it

[33b] The capital letters indicate the part sung by the
chorus (refrain) while the small letters indicate the soloist's
part.

[34] Apel and Davison, No. 19e.

was called a <u>virelai</u>.

E, dame jolie (Virelai)
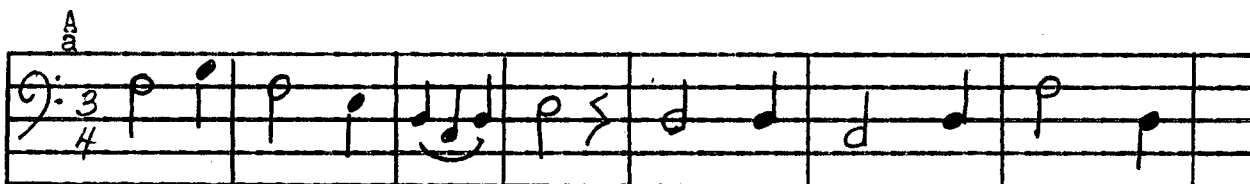
1,5   <u>E, da- me jo- li- e,</u>   <u>Mon cuer sans fau-ceir Met</u>
4   Si for-ment m'a- gri- e   Li douls malz d'a-meir Ke
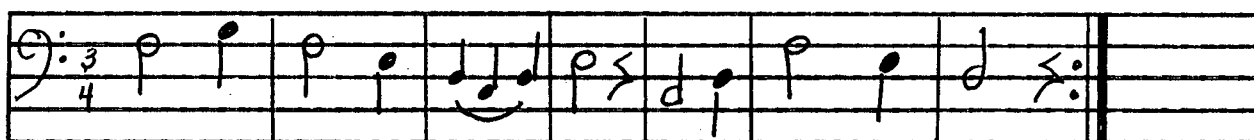
1,5   <u>en vos- tre bai-li- e</u>   <u>Ke ne sai vo peir.</u>
4   par sa si- gno-ri- e   Me co-vient chan-teir:
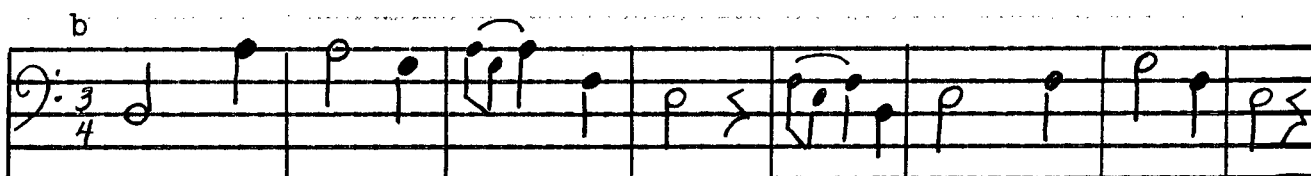
2   So- vant me voix con- plai-gnant   Et an mon cuer do- lo- sant
3   Dont tous li mous an- a- mant   Doit a- voir le cuer jo- iant

2   D'u- ne ma- lai- di- e.[35]
       Cui teilz malz mais- tri e.

From the <u>virelai</u> came the three principal <u>ballade</u> forms. In
the first type, AB cd cd ef AB, the refrain was omitted from
the middle section of the <u>virelai</u> and new material was

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[35] Apel and Davison, No. 19f.

substituted (ef); in the second, AB cd cd e ab AB, new material (e) was inserted before the refrain in the centre part; finally, in the third variety, ab ab cd E, the introductory refrain was omitted altogether. Here is an example of the third type.

Douce dame (Ballade)

1 "Dou-ce da- me de- bon- nai- re." "Fau-vel que te faut?"
2 "Mon cuer vous doins sanz re- trai-re." "Sen en toi de- faut."

3 "Ne vous en chaut il?" "Fi, mau- vais ou- til."

3 "Puis qu'en- si est que fe- rai?" "Ja m'a- mours ne te le- rai."

From the sequence-type (one melody for every two lines) came the lai, estampie, and strophic lai. Although the lai was patterned after the ecclesiastical sequence, aa bb cc, it was unlike the sequence in that the ending of the second

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36 Apel and Davison, No. 19c.

versicle could vary a trifle from the previous phrase,
for example, the first phrase could have a half close at
the cadence while the second had a full close[37]. A reinforced
lai may be represented thus: aa bb$_{cc}$ dd ee ff/^{gg} hh and the
strophic lai as a bb cc d, or simply a, a, b, a.

Since the vers and chanson were derived from the
hymn their music was through-composed. In the chanson,
however, a repeated passage was placed before the section
resembling the hymn, thus: ab ab c.

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[37] For examples of the various kinds of lais v.
Apel and Davison, No. 19.

Chapter III

Although monodic music had reached maturity in three great traditions, those of church, court, and folk, it was the music of the church which had the greatest influence on literary developments in medieval England.

Oddly enough it was in the field of drama, towards which the church had formerly shown such hostility[1], that one of the first manifestations of its influence was felt.

It is fairly obvious that the two elements necessary for drama, dramatic action and dialogue, are present in embryonic form in the ecclesiastical rites. The dramatic tendencies of the Christian worship becomes obvious to anyone attending High Mass, for it is an essentially dramatic commemoration of one of the most critical moments of Christ's life (a miracle re-evoked); likewise, the great festivals of the Christian year lend themselves readily to dramatic

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[1] In Roman times the most popular theatrical entertainments were the performances of mimes in which coarse humour and indecency combined to secure the attention of the vulgar. With the rise of Christianity this type of theatre ran into difficulties. "The Church objected to its association with paganism, to the fact that, in its lower forms, it often ridiculed the new religion, and perhaps most of all to the immorality of both performances and performers." Baugh, A. C., ed., A literary history of England, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1948, Bk. I.

presentation. For example, on Palm Sunday, on the Monday
or Tuesday and the Wednesday in Holy Week, and on Good
Friday, the reading of the Gospel narratives of the Passion
often resolves itself into a regular oratorio. Moreover,
particular episodes in these Passions are appropriate
for special dramatic action. On Wednesday in Holy Week,
for example, at the words _Velum templi scissum est_ the
Lenten veil, which, since the first Sunday in Lent, had
hidden the sanctuary from the people, is dropped to the
ground.

The other important element of the drama, dialogue,
was present in the practice of antiphonal and responsorial
singing. "In fact, it has been suggested that the first
impulse leading to the development of ecclesiastical drama
was to be found in the antiphonal chanting of dialogued
scenes in the Gospels by the early Syrians[2]".

Since the medieval artists added both text and
music to the established liturgy with great freedom[3] it

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[2] Reese, G., _Music in the Middle Ages_, p. 194.

[3] About the ninth century singers began the practice
of embellishing the chants of the mass (_Kyrie_, _Gloria_, _Sanctus_,
Agnus Dei, and _Introit_). The first stage in this development
seems to have been the insertion of melismas before, after,
or between the words of an already existing plainsong: the
second, the setting of words to them (apparently to make the
memorization of the florid passages less difficult).
New Oxford history of music, p. 128-129.

did not require much ingenuity to take the next step and
actually dramatize the tropes that had dramatic content.
The germ of the earliest drama is apparent in the tropes
to the Introits for Christmas and Easter. One of the
most significant of these tropes was the <u>Quem quaeritis</u>
which dealt with the coming of the women to Christ's tomb
and with the conversation that went on between them and
the angel who stood guard there[4]. It begins thus:

Quem quae- ri- tis in se- pul- chro,

(O) Chri- sti- co- lae?
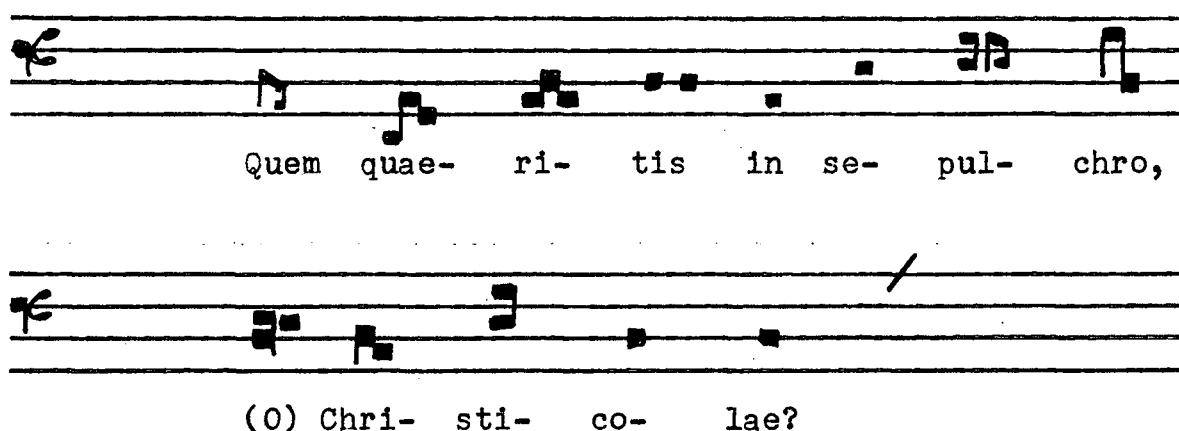
Iesum Nazarenum crucifixum, o caelicolae.
non est hic, surrexit sicut praedixerat.
ite, nuntiate quia surrexit de sepulchro.

(Resurrexi et adhuc... leading to
Introit[5])

Apparently this trope was acted on Easter Sunday for

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[4] Reese, G., <u>Music in the Middle Ages</u>, p. 194.

[5] "It first appears in two tenth century manuscripts,
one of Saint Gall and the other of Saint Martial". Facsimile
of the original St. Gall manuscript found in <u>New Oxford
history of music</u>, vol. 2, p. 178.

the _Concordia regularis_, written in the latter half of
the tenth century "by Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester,"
gives a description of a performance of this trope as
"part of the third nocturn at Matins on Eastern morning":

>While the third lesson is being chanted,
>let four brethern vest themselves. Let
>one of these, vested in an alb, enter as
>though to take part in the service, and
>let him approach the sepulchre without
>attracting attention and sit there quietly
>with a palm in his hand. While the third
>respond is chanted, let the remaining
>three follow, and let them all, vested in
>copes, bearing in their hands thuribles
>with incense, and stepping delicately
>as those who seek something, approach
>the sepulchre. These things are done in
>imitation of the angel sitting in the
>monument and the women with spices coming
>to anoint the body of Jesus. When there-
>fore he who sits there beholds the three
>approach him like folk lost and seeking
>something, let him begin in a dulcet voice
>of medium pitch to sing _Quem quaeritis_.
>And when he has sung it to the end, let
>the three reply in unison _Ihesu Nazarenum_.
>So he, _Non est hic, surrexit sicut_
>_praedixerat. Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit_
>_a mortuis_. At the word of this bidding
>let those three turn to the choir and say
>_Alleluia! resurrexit Dominus!_ This said,
>let the one still sitting there and as if
>recalling them, say the antiphon _Venite et_
>_videte locum_. And saying this, let him
>rise, and lift the veil, and show them the
>place bare of the cross, but only the cloths
>laid there in which the cross was wrapped.
>And when they have seen this, let them set
>down the thuribles which they bare in that
>same sepulchre, and take the cloth, and hold
>it up in the face of the clergy, and as if to
>demonstrate that the Lord has risen and is
>no longer wrapped therein, let them sing
>the antiphon _Surrexit Dominus de sepulchro_,
>and lay the cloth upon the altar. When
>the antiphon is done, let the prior,
>sharing in their gladness at the triumph
>of our King, in that, having vanquished
>death, He rose again, begin the hymn

Te Deum laudamus. And this begun, all
the bells chime out together[6].

As the popularity of the trope increased it was
made more elaborate: the text was expanded to include the
apostle scene of Peter and John and the scene between
Mary Magdalen and Christ in the Garden while the use of
church vestments gave a dramatic character to the performance.
Later, another character was introduced. This was the spice
merchant from whom the Maries stopped to buy the spices for
Jesus' burial. At first, he was a "persona muta" but in the
fourteenth century he became a speaking character and very
often introduced an element of comedy. Finally, the Thomas
episode was added, thus completing the drama of the Resurrection.

The scope of the music, too, was widened to include
metrical hymns and sequences. When these additions were not
merely choral overtures but were inserted into the dialogue
itself they had a special significance. If the metrical hymns,
for example, were in the form of a *planctus* or lament and were
sung at an emotional crisis in the drama (when the Maries
approached the sepulchre or when the women knelt at the foot
of the cross) they added greatly to the humanity and dramatic
intensity of the play. Probably the most important insertion
of all was the *Victimae paschali.* Originally written as an
Alleluia sequence it was introduced into the *Quem quaeritis*
about the thirteenth century[7].

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[6] Reese, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-195.

[7] *Loc. cit.*

Another important day in the life of Christ became the occasion for the staging of plays, for the twelve days of Christmas became just as significant as Easter in forming a drama. Like the Easter drama, the Christmas play grew out of a trope, this time the _Quem quaeritis in praesepe pastores, dicite_. Later, it was absorbed into a drama belonging to the Epiphany, known as _Tres regis_ or _Stella_[8]. In the simplest version (which is from the Anglo-French monastery of Saint Martial) the three kings enter the church singing, show their gifts, then, seeing the star, follow it to the high altar where they offer their gifts while an Angel announces the birth of Christ. The play ends with the exit of the kings to the sacristy.

Like the Easter drama the _Stella_ received several additions. One of these new episodes was the slaughter of the innocents by Herod's soldiers. Another addition, known as the _Ordo Prophetarum_[9] is interesting because it owes its origin to a chanted _lectio_ instead of a trope. In this sermon several prophets are called to give witness to the birth of a Saviour. Later versions added pagan witnesses like Virgil and the Sibyl. The prophecy which the Sibyl sings in these dramas is the famous _Song of the Sibyl_, considered to be the oldest song that has come down to us in a decipherable form. Here is a tenth century version:

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[8] Baugh, _op. cit._, p. 275.

[9] _Ibid._, pp. 275-276.

Ju- di- ci- i sig- nim: tell- us su- do- rem, ma- des- cet.
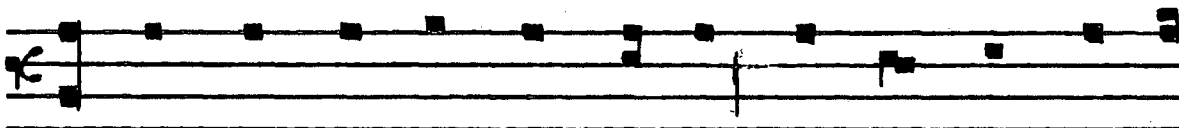
E ce- lo rex ad- vé- ni- et per se- cla fu- tu-

rus, sci- li- cet in car- ne pre- sens ut iu- di- cet
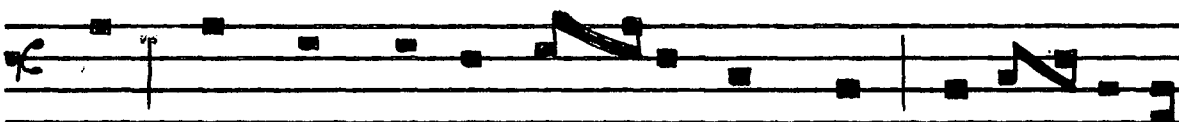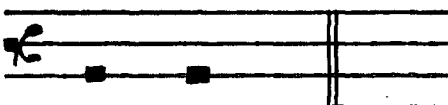
or- bem [10].

Besides these plays that grew out of the two great seasons of festivity, there were other Latin plays which were in a sense liturgical, for they were performed during intervals in the service. In this group, noteworthy examples are the Play of the image of Saint Nicholas and the Saint Martial Sponsus. Since these plays use local dialect extensively in their text they may have served as transitional forms. The Sponsus (a tale of the Foolish Virgins) opens with a Latin chorus Adest Sponsus qui est Christus, after

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[10] Quoted by G. Reese, op. cit., p. 199.

which the angel Gabriel addresses the virgins and warns

them in four French stanzas to expect "un epos, Sauvaire

a nom". Each stanza has a refrain which was probably sung

chorally:

                                    ...gaire noi dormet!
          Aisel espos que vos hor atendet[11].

The lyric dialogue, in which the Fatuae try to get oil from

first, the Prudentes, then from some Mercatores, is in

Latin, but it has a French refrain, "dolentas, chaitivas,

trop i avem dormit." The whole drama, with the music of

the introduction recurring in the Epilogue, presents the

pattern of the reinforced lai.

     Since the liturgical dramas were chanted the calibre

of the music determined, to some extent, the dramatic

intensity of the plays. When, for example, there were

frequent repetitions of the same strophic melody (as in the

case of some of the Saint Nicholas dramas[12]) the play became

dull and uninteresting; on the other hand, if an attempt at

individuality or expressiveness was made (as in the part of

Mary Magdalene in a twelfth-century Resurrection drama or

the lamentation of Rachel in the Massacre of the Innocents[13])

then the play became more vivid to the imagination and more

appealing to the emotions.

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[11] This melody imitates the sequence with double cursus, that is, it follows the pattern aa bb cc, bb cc dd, New Oxford history of music, p. 213.

[12] Reese, op. cit., p. 196.

[13] Both these illustrations are mentioned by T. Gérold in La musique au Moyen Age, pp. 62 and 63.

Although texts of the liturgical period are rare there is no reason to doubt that England had its full share in the early development of religious drama. As the observance of the liturgy was more or less the same in all countries of Europe, the developments within the service were bound to be of a universal rather than a local character. The scarcity of surviving texts can be accounted for by the destruction of liturgical books at the Reformation.

By the thirteenth century, the liturgical drama in Europe had reached its full term of development and was overshadowing the sacrificial and devotional rituals. Not only were the extended dramas intruding on the service but they were attracting such large crowds that the churches were unable to accommodate all those that desired to see the plays. Moreover, these crowds were demanding more secular incidents in the plays with the result that the devotional quality of the dramas decreased as their popularity increased. When the plays became too unseemly for the holy precincts they were moved outside, first to the church yard and then to the market place.

In England, in the fourteenth century, clear discrimination between ritual plays and performances out of doors is shown, as in Robert Manning's <u>Handling synne</u>:

> hyt ys forbode hym, yn þn þe decre,
> Myracles for to make or se;
> ....

He may yn þe cherche þurgh þys resun,
Pley þe resurreccyun [14].

Once the plays were in the market-place and in competition with other forms of entertainment the strict Latin would give way to the vernacular. This transition is apparent in the Shrewsbury fragments where the words of the speech are at first sung in Latin and then spoken in the vernacular. The celebrated Prose de l'ane may be quoted as an example of this trend.
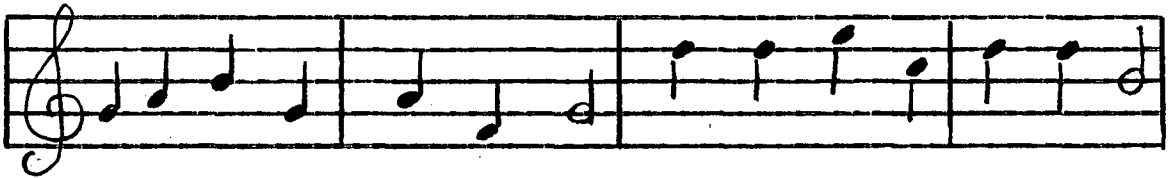
O- ri- en- tis par- ti- bus Ad- ven- ta- vit a- si- nus
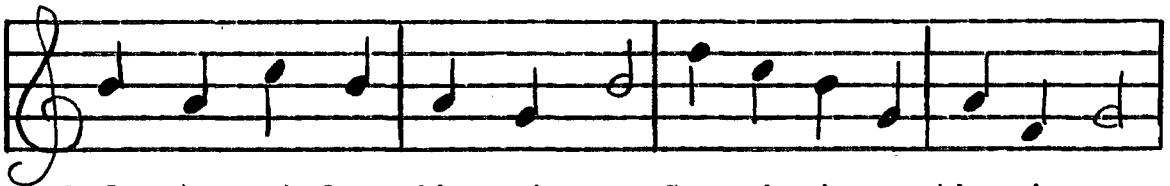
Pul- cher et for- tis- si- mus Sar-ci-nis ap-tis-si-mus,

Hez, Sir As- ne, hez [15].

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[14] Ed., F. J. Furnivall, London, K. Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., E.E.T.S. (Original Series), 1901-3, No. 119-123, 11.4637-8, 4641-2.

[15] Apel and Davison, Anthology of Music, No. 17a.

Late in the twelfth or early in the thirteenth century the festival of Corpus Christi was established by the Church. In this celebration the leading ceremony was a great procession in which the host, escorted by civic and religious dignitaries, was borne through the street and displayed at various stations along the route. When it became the custom to perform dramas on this date[16] rather than at Easter the plays became more or less attached to this procession.

In England the plays performed on Corpus Christi day took the form of great processional cycles. In these cycles the action was divided into a number of independent scenes each of which had its own moveable platform. Since these stages were mobile each scene could be performed at several stations along the processional route.

The characteristic English cycle was given annually under the superintendence of the corporation of an important city, while the separate scenes were usually the special charge of one or more of the local guilds. Such cycles can be studied in the records of Chester, York, Beverly, Coventry, Newcastle, Lincoln, and Norwich.

The cycle of plays produced at York is interesting

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[16] As Corpus Christi was two months after Easter the weather was more suitable for outdoor performances.

because it is the most complete of the extant English cycles. It covers the whole of the Bible stories, from the Expulsion from Paradise to Christ's ascension, the death of Mary, and the Judgment Day. As some of the episodes are extremely energetic and humorous these plays are often good theatre. Noah's wife, for example, animates the play of <u>Noah and the flood</u>, with her humour, while, in the <u>Play of the shepherds</u>, vernacular is introduced[17].

York influence is apparent in the small group of Towneley Plays. The most important work in this collection (which is generally attributed to a talented fifteenth-century writer, known as the Wakefield Master) is the <u>Secunda pastorum</u>.

Owing to the lack of evidence it is difficult to determine how the craft cycles were performed. Most critics have concluded that the musical rendering used in the liturgical drama gave way to the more realistic spoken word. But many of the plays are written in an elaborate stanza form, which, in the lyric, suggested the presence of music. Of course, these forms might have been unfunctional and archaic even at this date. Charles Davidson, however, postulates that the northern septenar stanza was originally sung to the accompaniment of the harp in a recitative

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[17] Baugh, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 280.

delivery[18]. He extends this theory and suggests that the plays, which at York and Wakefield were based on this septenar stanza, were chanted, not in the style of plainchant, but rather to a monotonous tune similar to the type which accompanied the old ballads. If the dialogue were chanted in this manner it would account for the presence of minstrels, whom the manuscripts of the plays and the account books of the guilds describe as being present at the performances. Of course it is possible that the minstrels were used for other purposes than accompanying the plays for they could have been used in the announcements of the plays (for these seem to have been versified like the plays themselves), between scenes, or at the conclusion of the play. At the end of the Digby Purification play, for instance, the Epilogue speaks to the audience thus:

> Also ye menstralles doth your diligens
> A-fore our departyng geve vs a daunce[19].

This admonition might be a cue for a jig like those which were common in the Elizabethan drama. The custom probably arose from the practice of singing at the conclusion of the liturgical dramas, where the end of the play often coincided with the Introit.

Although it is impossible to prove that the cycles

[18] "Studies in English mystery plays", Transactions, Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1892-1895, vol. 9, p. 228.

[19] "Herod's killing of the children", The Digby plays, ed., F. J. Furnivall, London, K. Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., E.E.T.S. (Extra Series), 1896, No. 70, p. 23, 11.565-566.

were intoned there is enough music surviving in the plays
to indicate that it was an important feature of their
presentation. The Chester cycle, for instance, has twenty-
three songs in fourteen different plays, while the Towneley
cycle has eighteen songs in eight plays, and the York,
twenty-seven songs in twelve plays.

The polyphonic type of music that was becoming
popular in aristocratic and professional circles was not
reflected in the mysteries to any great extent. True,
there are a few examples of part-singing, one of which is
the three-part song of the Wakefield Shepherds, in the
Towneley play _Alia eorundem (II)_ where the shepherds
display a remarkable professional knowledge of part-singing:

Primus pastor.	Lett me syng the tenory
ijus pastor.	And I the tryble so hye.
iijus pastor.	Then the meyne fallys to me
	lett se how ye chauntt[20].

Another example which may be cited is the song at the
conclusion of the _Una pagina pastorum (I)_ in which an
obvious reference to descant singing is made:

> Amen, to that worde syng we therto
>   On hight;
> To Ioy all sam,
> With myrth and gam,
> To the lawde of this lam
> Syng we in syght[21].

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[20] _The Towneley plays_, ed., G. England, London, K. Paul,
Trench, Trübner and Co., E.E.T.S. (Extra Series), 1897, No. 71,
p. 122, ll. 186-189.

[21] _The Towneley plays_, ed., G. England, p. 116,
ll. 488-502.

Usually, however, the music was of a familiar nature, such as Latin sequences and antiphons borrowed from the liturgy. There were certain conventions as to where these songs were sung. The antiphon, <u>Ascendo ad patrem meum</u>, for instance, was always sung by Christ at the culmination of the Ascension play. The sequence <u>Veni, Creator Spiritus</u> was usually sung by the two angels in the descent of the Holy Ghost, while the <u>Gloria in excelsis</u> was sung either by or to the shepherds in the Nativity plays. Examples of vernacular song were also present. In the Chester plays of the Deluge, for instance, rowdy Mistress Noah and the good gossips sing in their cups, <u>Here is a pottell of malmsy</u>.

If the cycles are closely examined one finds that their music is not incidental but serves as a structural element in the play, foreshadowing a similar use in the Interludes and later Academic Comedies, the parts of which were outlined by musical insertions[22]. The same general principles are found in the English cycles. In the <u>Alia eorundem (II)</u>, for example, the three-part song of the shepherds marks the end of the Introductory passage dealing exclusively with the shepherds, and prepares the way for the Mak farce. In a similar fashion, the <u>Gloria</u> separates the play within a play and a strain of music

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[22] Smith, Leo, <u>Music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries</u>, London, Toronto, Vancouver, J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1931, p. 170.

marks the _finis_.

Moreover, the music of the play is used as a subtle means of emphasizing the character of the players: the "good" people of the drama, the shepherds and the Angel, sing in a musicianly style, while the comedy character, Mak, enters to off-key singing and sings his lullaby in a manner that is indistinguishable from Gill's groaning.

Thus, the mystery cycles, which were evolved from music, through the liturgical drama, are structurally dependent on their sister art.

The lyric is the closest of all the arts to music.
Originally composed to be sung to, or accompanied by, the
lyre it gradually came to mean poetry of the simple type
of personal expression that lent itself to, or suggested,
song. As a result, it has many characteristics in common
with its sister art. Sound and rhythm, for example, are
essential to both music and poetry. Moreover, just as the
word acquires its full meaning only as a member of a sentence
group, so the note of music only becomes comprehensible when
it belongs to a musical unit, like the phrase. While it is
possible to say that the line resembles the musical phrase
it cannot be said that end-rhyme fulfills the same function
as the cadence. If a tune, for instance, is comprised of
two phrases of equal length in the order A B, the first
phrase ending in a half close and the second in a full close,
then there is no reason why the lines could not rhyme aa or ab.

It is interesting to note, however, that the process
of the gradual purification of end-rhyme probably was related
to the development of music. The earliest lyrics of the
Middle Ages, for example, employed the litany principle
in their presentation, that is, each line had the same melody
and returned to the same fundamental cadence point, usually
the half close. In the course of time the single tonality
of the melody could have led to the practice of constructing

stanzas of indefinite length based on one particular final vowel, thus introducing the simplest form of rhyme, assonance or monorhyme aaa....

Similarly, when the sequence form was developed, it would not take an enterprising poet-composer long to discover the artistic advantages that the sequence (with its change of melody every two lines) offered, and apply the same principle to his end-rhymes. This theory is given some confirmation by the fact that the earliest poems employing the two-rhyme principle, like Sunset on Calvary[1], are in the form of the distich, aa bb, which is an exact reproduction of the sequence.

Later, a third line was added which probably was a development from the "tag" that accompanied nearly all sequences. In the early stages it ended in the "a" vowel in order to conform to the Alleluia chant which generally preceded the sequence.

> Laetabundus
> > exsultet fidelis chorus,
> > > Alleluia;
>
> Regem regum
> > intactae profudit thorus;
> > > Res miranda[2].

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[1] Brown, C., ed., English lyrics of the thirteenth century, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1932, p. 1. All English medieval lyrics quoted in this chapter are from this edition unless it is stated otherwise.

[2] Greene, R. L., ed., The early English carols, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1935, p. 78.

When other vowels were employed the tercet, aab, or
rime couée of Robert Manning of Brunne resulted. Judging
by the number of poems written in this style it must have
been one of the most popular forms in the Middle Ages.
Two examples are The Prayer of the five joys and Gaude
Virgo Mater Christi[3].

The practice of interlacing rhymes marked a
revolution in the melody of verse, for it introduced the
simultaneous application of two different melodic patterns.
The probable source for this type of poetry was the hymn,
especially the processional hymn. The strophes of these
ranged from bipartite structure, like ab ab (as in Lucis
creator optime), to longer ones like ab cdcd (as in
Lustra sex qui iam peractis). Some contained melodic
sequences, that is, (repetition in another register)
while others employed sameness of cadence. As the hymns
used most of the rhyme schemes employed in the Middle Ages
there is at least a possibility that they were the major
source for the quatrain type of rhyme. They are also
responsible for the specialized form aaab (common in the
carol), the "b" line coming from the cauda of the Latin hymn.

It cannot be stated with any certainty when, or how,
these types were introduced into England. Although Edwin
Guest contends, in his History of English rhythms[4], that

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[3] Brown, op. cit., pp. 27 and 32.

[4] London, G. Bell and Sons, 1882, p. 117.

assonantal rhyme was present in all older poems of the
Welsh and Irish from the sixth century, about all that
can be said with any certainty is that, by the thirteenth
century, Robert Manning of Brunne reported, in his
translation of Peter Langtoft called the Chronicle of
England that four kinds of rhyme were in existence.

> I made it not forto be praysed,
> Bot at þe lewed men were aysed,
> If it were made in ryme couwee,
> Or in strangere or interlace,
> þat rede Inglis it ere inowe
> þat couthe not haf coppled a kowe,
> þat outhere in couwee or in baston
> Som suld haf ben fordon,
> So þat fele men þat it herde
> Suld not witte howe þat it ferde[5].

Examples of the various types of rhyme used in England may
be found in the following thirteenth-century lyrics: the
tercet and couplet (abb ab) in I walk with sorrow, (No. 8),
two tercets (abb ccb) in Stabat iuxta Christi crucem, (No. 14),
and a quatrain and tercet (abab bbc) in Now comes the blast
of winter, (No. 7).

The structure of the stanza, too, depended on the
form of the music. On the whole, Middle English stanzas
followed the rules set down by Dante; he declared that

> ... every stanza is set for the reception
> of a certain ode; but they appear to differ
> in the modes (in which this is done); for

---

[5] Manning, R., "Preface to Story of England, Part 2",
ed., T. Hearne in The works of Thomas Hearne, London, printed
for S. Bagster, 1724, vol. 3, ch. 6, p. 99, ll. 13-22.

some proceed throughout to one continuous ode,
that is, without the repetition of any
musical phrase, and without any <u>diesis</u>;
and we understand by <u>diesis</u>, a transition
from one ode to another: (this when speaking
to the common people, we call volta)
There are some stanzas which admit of a
<u>diesis</u> and there can be no <u>diesis</u> in
our sense of the word unless a repetition
of one ode be made either before the <u>diesis</u>,
or after, or both. If the repetition be made
before the <u>diesis</u>, we say that the
stanza has feet; and it ought to have two,
though sometimes there are three; If the
repetition be made after the <u>diesis</u>, then
we say that the stanza has verses. If no
repetition be made before (the <u>diesis</u>) we
say that the stanza has a fronte; if none be
made after, we say that it has a Serma or
Coda[6].

The following examples should make this clear.

Lylie-whyt hue is, hire rode so rose on rys, þat reueþ me mi rest.	pes
wymmon war & wys, of prude hue bereþ þe pris, burde on of þe best.	pes
	diesis
þis wommon woneþ by west, brihtest vnder bys; heuene y tolde al his, þat o nyht were hire gest.	serma or coda

(No. 78, ll. 31-40)

II

On leome is in þis world ilist, þer-of is muchel pris; a-risen is god & þat is rist from deþe to lif.	frons
	diesis

[6] "De vulgari eloquentia", <u>The Latin works of Dante</u>,
transl. A. G. Ferrers-Howell, London, J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd.,
1904, Bk. 2, ch. 10, pp. 100-101. Chaytor uses Dante as an
illustration in <u>The troubadours</u>, p. 24.

Al for ure redempciun   )
He þolede pine & passiun,   ) verses
Derne wnden & greue;   )
He broutte to saluaciun   )
þe world þat was ibrot adun   ) verses
þuru adam & eue.   )

(No. 24, ll. 1-10)

III

Of a mon Matheu þohte,   )
þo he þe wyngord whrohte-   ) pes
ant wrot hit on ys boc-   )
In marewe men he sohte,   )
at vnder mo he brohte,   ) pes
ant nom ant non forsoc.   )

             diesis

At mydday ant at non   )
he sende hem þider fol son   ) verses
to helpen hem wiþ hoc.   )
huere foreward wes to fon-   )
So þe furmest heuede ydon-   ) verses
ase þe erst vndertoc.   )

(No. 80, ll. 1-12)

A few poems like <u>The Lovliest Lady in Land</u> are characterized
by a refrain:

Ichot a burde in boure bryht
þat fully semly is on syht,
menskful maiden of myht,
feir ant fre to fonde;
In al þis wurhliche won,
a burde of blod & of bon
neuer gete y nuste non
Lussomore in londe.

Blow, northerne wynd,
sent þou me my suetyng!   Refrain
blow, norþerne wynd,
blou! blou! blou!
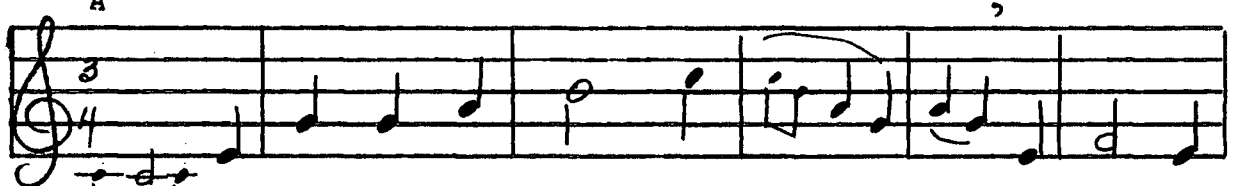
(No. 83, ll. 1-12)

The model for this type was to be found in the processional
hymn which had a refrain that the people sang at the
beginning and after every stanza. Since the origin of
the hymn was popular it is possible that the hymn and the
carol (which is so like it in form) may have received
their inspiration from some ancient folk-practice which
made use of the refrain.

The strophes themselves are based on the musical
form of the hymn and sequence. A glance at the structure
of the music and verse of Death's wither-clench will make
this clear:

A

Man---mei lon- ge him li-   ves we--- - ne,-ac of- te-
Fair we-der of- te him went to re--- - me,-an fer- li-

B

him---li- yet þe wreinch;   þar- vo- re, man, þu þe bi-
che--ma- ket is blench,

þench - al sel va- lu- i þe gre- ne, wel- a- wey! nis

king ne Que- ne þat ne sel drin- ke of deth- is drench. Man,

er þu fal- le of þi bench, þu sin- ne a quench[7].

In this ten-lined stanza the composer has used the
sequence form AA and two new sentences B and C. The A sentence
consists of two phrases. The first or "a" phrase (from bar 1,
to bar 5_2) is built around the tonic chord but ends with a
suggestion of a half close, the "b" phrase (bar 5_3 to bar 9_3)
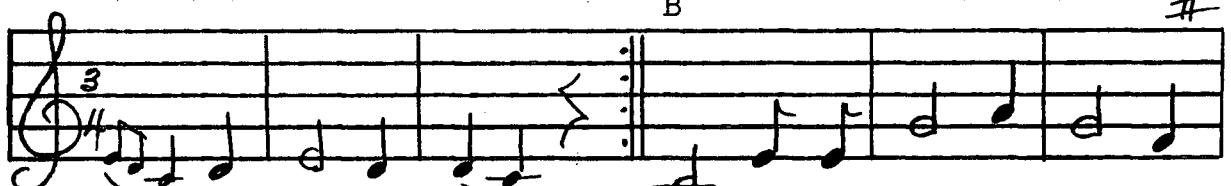is made up of two strains, the first of which circles around
the third and root of the tonic chord (from bar 5_3 to 7_2)
and is then repeated in the second strain (bar 7_3 to bar 9_3)
a second lower but with a slight alteration so that it can end
with a perfect cadence. The B sentence is divided into four
phrases. The beginning of the first phrase (bars 10, to 13_3)
is similar to bars 1 and 2 in construction but then, instead
of moving up to the tonic, the melody descends immediately
to the dominant (which in the modernization is suggested as
a modulation to G major). The second and third phrases

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[7] Modernization by Bukofzer in G. Reese's _Music in the
Middle Ages_, p. 243. For original v. Stainer, Sir John, ed.,
Early Bodleian music, London, Novello and Co., 1901, vol. 2,
No. 5.

(from bars 14, to 21$_2$) make up a new melody which ends in a half close. Although the final phrase (bar 21$_3$ to 25$_2$) begins differently from the "c" phrase its concluding three bars are the same (with the exception of the two eighth notes, instead of the quarter note, on A to accommodate the extra syllable in the words). The final sentence, C, uses material from the sequence section, for example, its last seven beats repeat the last seven beats of the A section (again with the exception of the two eighth notes, instead of a quarter note on D).

The form of the music affects the structure of the verse in several ways. First, the parallel construction of the sequence section is duplicated in the first two sets of couplets, for they are identical in rhythm, meter, and rhyme. Secondly, the marked rhythm of the B section (♩♩) is imitated in the strong meter of the words. Thirdly, the extra syllables of lines 9 and 10 are not noticed because the music smooths out the difficulty by using short notes for the extra syllables. Finally, it is interesting to note that the composer felt compelled to put a cadence wherever the "b" rhyme occurred, for example, the "b" rhyme and the perfect cadence coincide in both the A and C sections, while, in the B section it comes at the half close.

Whereas this particular example has two repeated

musical sentences and two different ones, there is no
reason why there should not be a new phrase for every
tercet or couplet, in which case it would be following the
hymn pattern. An example of this type is the Dies irae.
Here the melody is through-composed like the hymn, but the
internal structure of the poem is similar to the parallel
construction of the sequence. Its form may be illustrated
thus:

$$\frac{aa}{A} \quad \frac{bb}{B} \quad \frac{cc}{C} \quad \frac{dd}{D} \quad \frac{ee}{E} \quad \frac{ff}{F} \quad \frac{gg}{G} \quad \frac{hh}{H} \quad \frac{ijkl}{I} \ _8$$

A number of the poems of the thirteenth and
fourteenth century are based directly on the melodies and
practices of the church. Saint Godric's hymns, Criste and
Sainte Marie and his Hymn to the Virgin, may be classed as
examples of this type. Godric claimed that these hymns
were divinely dictated, but more likely they are settings
of the liturgical chants to which they are set in the
manuscripts[9].

Previous to the appearance of Godric's hymns there
developed a song, In Rama sonat gemitus, that made reference
to the life of Thomas à Becket. It became very popular and
inspired many other antiphons on the same topic. There is

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[8] This is the form of the hymn as it appears in the
Missa pro Defunctis, op. cit., p. 5.

[9] Facsimile of the latter ms. is reproduced as a
frontispiece in Saintsbury's History of English prosody,
New York, Macmillan Co., 1906, vol. 1.

one, <u>An antiphon of St. Thomas of Canterbury</u>, which must
have been sung to the "Gloria", for the "evovae" that
stands at the end of the English version represents the
vowels of the last two words of the <u>Gloria Patri</u>,
"saeculorum. Amen" and were commonly used as an
abbreviation.

> þu ert froure a-mong mon-kunne,
> help vs nv of vre sunne, Evovae.
> <div align="right">(No. 42, ll. 9-10)</div>

An illustration of antiphony introduced into the structure
of the verse may be found in the fourteenth century <u>Est memor
mortis</u>. In this poem the poet divides his lines into English
and Latin as though for two choirs.

> Syth alle þat in þys wordle haþ been <u>in rerum natura</u>,
> Or in þys wyde wordle was seen <u>in humana cura</u>,
> Alle schalle passe wyþ-outen ween <u>via mortis dura</u>;
> God graunte þat mannys soule be cleen <u>penas non passura</u>
> Whan þow leste wenys, <u>veniet mors te superare</u>:
> Þus þy graue grenys, <u>ergo mortis memorare</u>.

In the second stanza he reverses the order and begins with
the Latin:

> <u>Vnde vir extolleris</u>, þow schalte be wormes mete,
> <u>Qui quamdiu vixeris</u> þy synnys wolte þou not lete[10];

Another poem to introduce church practices into the

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[10] Brown, C., <u>Religious lyrics of the fourteenth
century</u>, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924, No. 35, p. 239, ll. 1-8.

framework of its verse is Sunset on Calvary. Here the
exact parallelism of the lines immediately calls to mind
the rhythm and structure of the psalmodic chants.

> Nou goth sonne vnder wod,
> me reweth, marie, þi faire Rode.
> Nou goþ sonne vnder tre,
> me reweþ, marie, þi sone and þe.
> (No. 1, ll. 1-4.)

Many of the early lyrics are direct translations
of Latin sequences and hymns. One of the earliest of these
is the translation of the Stabat iuxta Christi crucem.

> Stabat iuxta Christi crucem,
> Stabat videns vitae ducem
>   Vitae valefacere,
> Stabat mater nec iam mater
> Et, quid sit eventus ater,
>   Novo novit funere.
> (No. 4, ll. 1-6.)

Although the first four stanzas of the English translation
are missing it is still easy to see that the following
example is very close to the original sequence in meter and
stanza pattern.

> þat leueli leor wid spald ischent,
> þat feire fel wid s(cur)ges rend
>   Þe blod out stremed oueral.
> Skoarn, upbraid, and schome speche,
> al hit was to sorhes eche-
>   i þoa þu was biluken al.
> (No. 4, ll. 1-6 of translation)

Other direct translations from church sources in
the thirteenth century were Gabriel's greeting to our Lady
(No. 44), which is a translation of the sequence Angelus ad

virginem, and <u>A Hymn to the heavenly Father</u> (No. 59),
based on the metrical paraphrase <u>Orationes dominicae</u>,
The Latin text of the former is accompanied by music in the
Arundel Manuscript.

In the fourteenth century appeared <u>A Song of the
five joys</u> (No. 31) which is based on the well-known hymn
<u>Primum fuit gaudium</u>, and <u>Gloria laus et honor</u> (No. 14)
taken from Bishop Theodulphus' hymn of the same name.
<u>A Prayer by the five joys</u> (No. 122), <u>A Prayer to be delivered
from the deadly sins</u> (No. 123), and <u>A Prayer for three boons</u>
(No. 124) were actually written for parts of the Liturgical
service[11].

Besides the many internal evidences that the medieval
lyric was associated with ecclesiastical music there is also
historical evidence that the church was an important force
in the shaping of the lyric. From time to time, during the
Middle Ages, she endeavoured to popularize her teachings
by making use of certain pagan elements in her service.
In the thirteenth century, for example, Saint Francis of Assisi,
the founder of the Franciscan order, is said to have initiated
the idea of instituting a sacred minstrelsy to free religion
from the chill of the cloister and the enigma of the Latin
language.

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[11] The last five poems are in Carleton Brown's
<u>Religious lyrics of the fourteenth century</u>.

The Franciscans landed in England early in the thirteenth century and speedily attained popularity. The first of their number to make his appearance in extant English poetry was Thomas of Hales, author of a <u>Love Ron</u> (No. 43). This love song to Christ expressly acknowledges the purpose of turning a liking for song into profitable ways (l. 198 to end of the poem). More extensive is the poetry of William Herbert[11a] whose work consists, for the most part, of translations of hymns, antiphons and other parts of the service and is an attempt to introduce vernacular versions of the hymns into his preaching. If these were written to replace the words of some light and worldly song, then their structure must have been greatly influenced by the music for which they were written.

In the thirteenth century there were also a few songs whose music reflected the tone of a more pagan era. The melancholy quality, which is one of the characteristics of Anglo-Saxon poetry, is well illustrated in this example, <u>Worldes blis</u>.

Worl- des   blis ne last no   throw-   e   Hit wit and

11a Brown, in <u>English Lyrics of the fourteenth century</u>, lists Nos. 12-25 as being written by William Herbert.
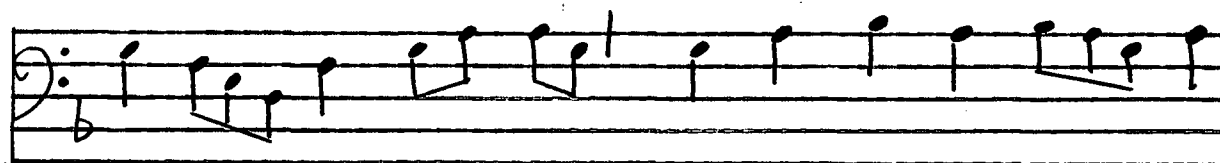
wend a- wey a- non.   The len-gur that hich hit
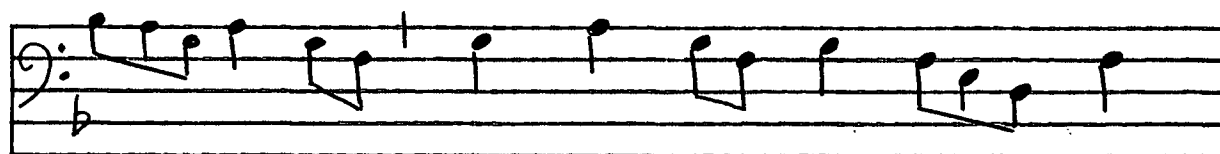
i   know- e,   The lasse hic fin- de   pris
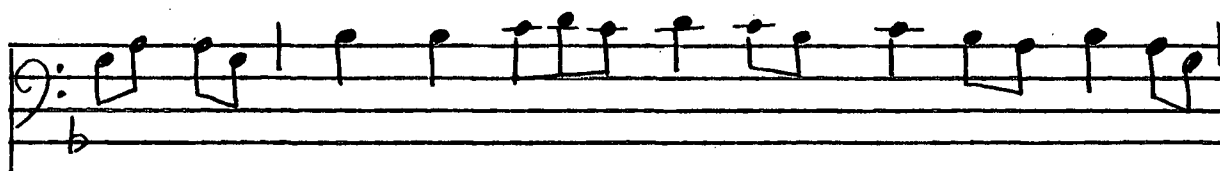
ther on.   For all   hit   is   i- meynd wyd ka- re.
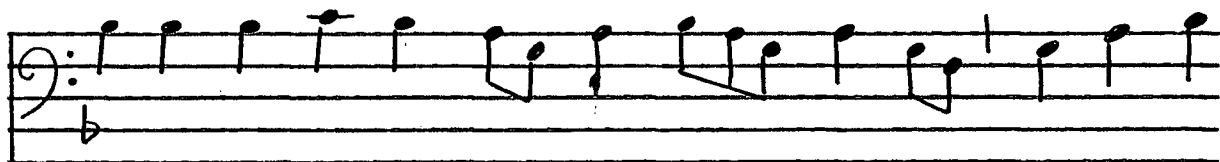
Mid sor-rew- e ant wid u-   uel   fa- re.   Ant at the
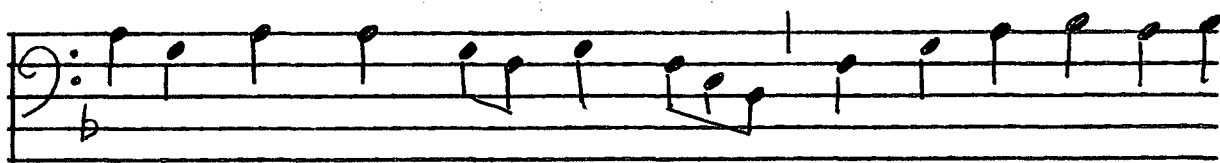
las-te pou- re   ant ba-   re,   Hit let mon wen hit gin-

net a-   gon. Al the blis-se this he-   re ant the-

re,   bi- lon- keth at   hen- de · wop   ant   mon[12].
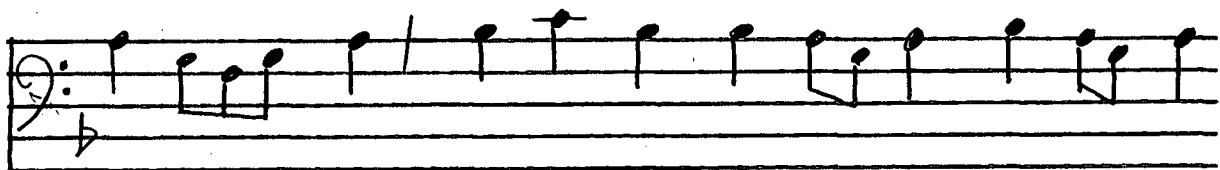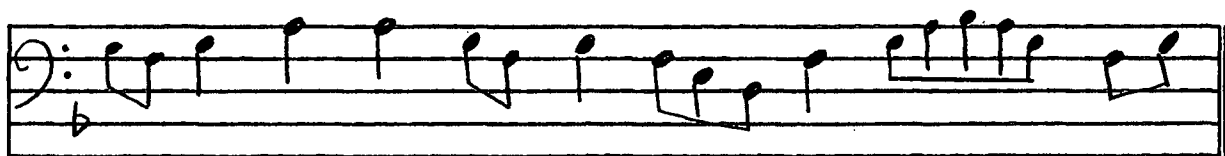
The sadness of the text is repeated in the melody,
which is in the Dorian mode (that is, the mode which most
closely resembles our "minor" key). The composer has achieved
this melancholy effect in the music by weaving his melody
around the notes that form the interval of a minor third,
(from the "G" up to the "B♭" and from the "F" down to the "D")
and by having a predominantly descending melody. The last
phrase (which descends from middle "C" to "D" before forming
the final cadential pattern) is particularly effective in
this respect.

All songs were not sad or religious in the pre-Chaucerian
period, for there were gay, lively pieces, like Alysoun,
(No. 77), Lenten is come with love to town (No. 31), and
The man in the moon (No. 89). Indeed the spirit of the period
may be characterized as that of Sumer is icumen in (No. 6):

> Svmer is icumen in,
> Lhude sing cuccu!
> Groweþ sed and bloweþ med
> and sprinþ þe wde nu.
> Sing cuccu!

---

[12] Apel and Davison, No. 23b.

Awe bleteþ after lomb,
lhouþ after calue cu,
Bulluc sterteþ, bucke uerteþ.
Murie sing cuccu!
Cuccu, cuccu,
Wel singes þu cuccu.
ne swikþu nauer nu!

Pes

Sing cuccu nu, Sing cuccu!

Sing cuccu, Sing cuccu nu!

Although this remarkable composition is not monophonic,
but a quadruple canon over a two-part _pes_, it has been
included because the gaiety of the words gives true expression
to the light-hearted side of medieval poetry. There are all
too few of these delightful love lyrics with their sprightly
rhythms and unusual, gay "major" moods which are in striking
contrast to the "minor" modal melodies of the religious lyrics.

The period which opened with the fourteenth century
was one of importance in the history of the arts. It saw
musicians, for the first time, turning to discuss the music
of the people "along with the dignified chant of the Church[13]".
The result was that poems which depended on dance rhythms
increased in popularity and poets of the new age were eager
to try out new forms. There were two _genres_ reflecting the
new mood that attained popularity at this time, namely, the
carol and the ballad. Although most of the manuscript copies

[13] Johannes de Grocheo was the first to draw scholar's
attention to the growing secular art, for, in his _Theoria_
he discussed secular music in a scholarly work. Sach's _A short
history of world music_, London, Dennis, Dobson Ltd., 1949, p. 101.

for these poems date from the fifteenth century the forms must have been in existence before that time because Chaucer and his contemporaries make frequent mention of them in their works[14]. As the structure of both the carol and the ballad is dependent on music, like the earlier lyrics, they have been included in this section rather than in the chapter on the fifteenth century.

The medieval carol, according to W. J. Phillips[15], was derived from a dance form which had its origin in the pagan ring dances of "pre-Christian" peoples. The division of these early dances into leader and chorus probably resulted in later dance songs, like the French carole, being divided into verse and burden. It is this type of song that seems to be the immediate predecessor of the English carol.

Although the carol may have had a popular origin, it is to the church that it probably owes its development. If it had been a popular form only, it would have been transmitted by oral tradition, which would have brought about variants of music and text. But the carol is derived from written

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[14] The carol, for example, is mentioned by Chaucer in The romant of the rose, in lines 744-5, 754, 759, and 781. Since both Chaucer and Langland knew of the legendery figure of Robin Hood there were presumably widely circulating ballads about him as early as the mid-fourteenth century.

[15] Phillips, W. J., Carols; their origin, music and connection with mystery plays, London, G. Routledge and Sons Ltd., 1921, p. 13.

copies[16]. The fact that a great many of them were found
in liturgical manuscripts surely implies that they were
used as optional insertions in the liturgy. Whereas they
could not substitute for the solemn chants of the service
they could undoubtedly take the place of the simple ones
of the Office.

Moreover, the liturgical quotations within the carols
themselves attest to a clerical atmosphere, for the principle
of providing a new context for a well-known phrase is the same
as the one which underlay the production of the tropes. It
is distinctly a "monkish" device. An example of this principle
may be found in the following carol, where, in two stanzas,
there are no less than four quotations from well-known hymns:

> Make we joye nowe in this fest,
> In quo Christus natus est.
>   Eya!
>
>   I
> A Patre vnigenitus
> Thorw a maiden is com to vs,
> Synge we to here and sey, "Welcome!
> Veni redemptor gencium."
>
>   III
> A solis ortus cardine,
> So myghty a lord was none as he,
> For to oure kynde he hath yeue gryth,
> Adam parens quod polluit.
>   (No. 31)

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[16] Greene, R. L., ed., The early English carols, Oxford,
Clarendon Press, 1935, pp. 325-350. In these pages Greene
gives a comprehensive list of the contents of the manuscripts
that contain carols (for example, the Harley No. 275, p. 326).
All carols quoted are from Greene's collection.

Finally, the two men who were most closely connected
with the carol in the fifteenth century were both churchmen.
The first, James Ryman, was an active member of the Franciscan
Order. He seems to have been a prolific writer of carols,
for Greene's collection contains 119 of Ryman's poems in
this form. The other name to appear on early manuscripts was
that of John Audelay, chaplain in an Augustinian house.
He has 24 carols in the same collection, two of which
(numbers 7 and 117) are listed as being accompanied by
musical notation. Of the sixteenth century composers of
carols Richard Smert, Gilbert Banister, and William Cornish
were connected with the Chapel Royal.

For the medieval writer the carol was distinguished
by its form rather than its subject. If the examples in
Greene's work are analysed the carol may be defined thus:
a song on any subject with an undetermined number of uniform
stanzas with a prefix of one, two, or more lines called the
burden, which consistently alternates with the verse.

Although it did not seem to matter how many lines
there were in a carol (as long as the stanzas were uniform)
the greatest number of those printed in Greene are based
on a four-lined stanza[17] rhyming aaaa (No. 331), aaab (No. 295)

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[17] There were exceptions of course, Nos. 203, 218,
230, and 328 being examples.

or abab as in this example from Ryman.

> Syng we alle thys tyme thus:
> "Te Deum laudamus."
>
>   I
> Fadere of Blisse omnipotent,
>   For thou hast made and create us,
> Mekely therfore with on assent
>   Te /Deum laudamus./
>
>   (No. 293)

When the writer used a "b" rhyme for the fourth line he was often copying the end rhyme of the burden. Further correspondence between burden and verse is observable in the practice of repeating one of the lines of the burden as the final line of the verse. For example, in carols No. 288-302 the last line of the burden is repeated for all stanzas while in No. 303 the first line of the burden is the repeated line in the stanzas.

The essential feature of the carol's structure, the burden, does not seem to be necessary to the meaning of the text for in many of the carols the same burden is employed over and over again. The words

> Singe we alle this tyme thus:
> "Te Deum laudamus."

or their variant

> Nowe syng we thys tyme thus:
> "Te Deum laudamus."

are used, for example, no less than seven times, in carols No. 289, 293, 295, 296, 297, 298, and 299.

The usual form of the burden is this two-lined structure. Sometimes, however, the burden is a single line as in carols No. 221-226, and No.336 or four lines as in No. 218 and 387, or (more rarely) three lines as in No. 443, while in carol No. 432 the first four lines of the burden are imitated with a slight variation on the repeat.

> This day day dawes,
> This gentill day day dawes,
> This gentill day dawes,
>   And I must home gone.
> This gentill day dawes,
> This day day dawes,
> This gentill day dawes,
>   And we must home gone.

Here the change in the wording seems to furnish proof for M. Bukofzer's contention that in any repetition of the burden the "first statement of the burden was performed /by a soloist or/ by a group of soloists /one voice to a part/ and the repeat by a choral group...(more than one singer to a part)[18]."

Musically the carol seems to be related to the processional hymn, for not only do both forms have a burden repeated after every verse but they use a different musical setting for the burden and stanza. Such similarities can hardly be coincidental.

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[18] Bukofzer, M., Studies in medieval and renaissance music, New York, Norton and Co., 1950, p. 153.

The musical form of the carol is varied and complex. Sometimes they are monophonic as in this example attributed to Ryman.

Burden

Sing we now all___ and some: Chris-te, re-dem-ptor om-ni- um[19].

More often they are written for two, three, or four voices. Here is an example of a two-part carol (with the option of a third voice in the burden) of the sixteenth century.

Burden

Ah,   man,   as - say, - as - say,   as -

Ah,   man,   as - say,   as - say,   as -

[19] "Medieval carols", Musica Britannica, ed., J. Stevens, published for the Royal Musical Association, London, Stainer and Bell Ltd., 1952, No. 7a, p. 110.

say, and ask - mer- cy - while — —

say, and ask — mer- cy while — for

thou — may. Man, have in mind how

thou may. Man, have in mind how

here - be fore for thy mis- deed- thou were - for-

here be — fore for thy mis- deed thou were for

The minor quality of this lovely melody is a fitting setting for the words. In the burden the composer achieves his effect by the use of predominantly minor or diminished harmonies throughout (there being only six major chords in the whole twelve bars). At the cadences, moreover, he did not use the usual full close of dominant to tonic but employed the more melodic one, of a diminished chord on the leading

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20 "Medieval Carols", op. cit., No. 17, p. 12.

note resolving into the tonic (in which the third is omitted). The use of this type of tonic chord as the first and last chords of the burden (which is reminiscent of early organum) establishes the minor mood of the carol that would have been destroyed if the major third had formed part of the chord. The rhythm of the melody is also very effective; in bars 8 and 11, for example, the composer reverts to a syncopated rhythm to give a lingering effect on the word "mercy" and at the cadence.

The verse consists of three musical phrases (a new phrase for each line of the text) whose cadential formulas are similar in rhythm (bars 16 to 17, , 20 to 21, , and bars 24 to 25,) and one phrase marked chorus which repeats the music of the last two bars of the burden.

Many of the carols do not show the comparative simplicity displayed by this illustration. Number 10 in the same volume, for example, has two burdens, the first being written for a soloist and the second for three voice-parts. The pattern of the carol, moreover, does not follow the usual order of burden, verse, burden.......burden. Here, verse one (for two voices) is followed immediately by verse two (for three voices) after which the two burdens are heard. In No. 30 a section for three voices (which is marked chorus) breaks into the pattern of the verse three times. The first and third of these insertions begin like the burden but do not repeat it exactly for variations occur towards the

end; the second interpolation is composed of new material. Finally, in No. 25, in bars 24_2 to 30 of the verse section, the top two voices, singing an identical melody, form an imitative pattern (canon) with the second voice.

In these last three examples, the gay, rhythmical music parallels the forthright words of the text.

The ballad, like the carol, is designated by a term that suggests the dance. There is danger, however, in laying too much stress on the lexicographical association of the word, for the early British ballads do not seem to have the characteristics that are usually associated with dance songs. Most forms that have their origin in the dance, like the French carole, for instance, are lyrical in character, but the English ballads are narrative, with the story being given at the climax of events. Moreover, the question and answer technique found in some ballads (which is usually cited as proof that they originated in the dance) is not present in the earliest recorded ballads, Judas and Saint Stephen[21]. On the contrary, these early specimens show the strophic forms and basic meters arising from the music and hymns of the medieval church. If Child's[22]

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[21] Pound, L., Poetic origins and the ballad, p. 102.

[22] The great collection of British ballads is that of F. J. Child, ed., English and Scottish popular ballads, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1882-1898, 5 vols.

chronology is correct, then the oldest ballads have an ecclesiastical stamp and, like the carol, are an attempt to popularize Biblical teaching. Indeed, C. J. Sharp suggests that it would not be difficult to make a ballad a carol or vice versa[23]. Since many examples, like Little Sir Hugh and The cherry tree carol, are on the borderline between the ballad and the carol, they may be related types. If this premise is correct, then, the early ballads are closer to the religious lyrics, in form, than to heroic poetry or romance.

This theory is borne out by the fact that the structure of the older ballads varies a great deal from that of the more recent ones. The stanzas of the older texts, for example, are in couplets, each line having seven main stresses, while the later ballads are usually in a four-lined stanza, the first and third lines having four main stresses and the second and fourth having three main stresses. It would seem, then, that the earliest ballads probably had an ecclesiastical origin, for their parallel structure definitely suggests the chanting formula of the liturgy. When the ballad became a popular form[24], however, the long lines were

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[23] English folk songs, ed. and arranged C. J. Sharp, London, Novello and Co. Ltd., 1916, vol. 1, Introduction, p. 14.

[24] When the ballads became secularized they passed into the hands of minstrels who incorporated in them many of the legends of the romances. As a result, many similarities with the Breton lais (Tam Lin, for example, like Launfal and Guigemar, being carried off to the Otherworld by a fairy queen) and motifs from the romances themselves (like the sympathetic plants springing from the lover's grave) are present in the ballads.

divided to make the style lighter and more lilting for
popular appeal.

There are other types of stanza than the quatrain
or seven-stress couplet to be found in Child's collection
of ballads, for a third of his examples are in couplets of
four-stress lines. Possibly these are quatrains whose second
and fourth lines, representing a kind of refrain, have been
lost because the early editors were not interested in the
music, and consequently, neglected to include these lines
in the poems, thinking they were unimportant. So many of
our ballad tunes have been irredeemably lost through neglect.

Ballads lived for the most part in the memory of
the people and were passed on from generation to generation
by word of mouth. Since there would be many changes in the
course of a tune's transmission, no printed ballad (except
those collected since scientific folksong study began) reach
us quite in the form they were originally fashioned. Miss
Gilchrist gives a good description of the process of change
in a tune in her essay for the English Association.

>A new ballad coming into currency would
>not be sung to a new tune. The singer
>often brings to the new words some tune
>he already knows and so makes them
>acquainted. Often the tune brings with
>it some of the words- perhaps only the
>refrain the singer already associates
>with it, which may have no relation
>whatever to the new ballad. The contact
>of tune and words results in the adaptation
>of the one to the other. Sometimes one,

> sometimes each insensibly yields something
> of its rhythm or stretches or contracts its
> line of melody, and before long the pair
> settle as it were into place, and the old
> tunes may then be halfway towards a new
> one[25].

Although it is impossible to trace the original music
to these ancient narratives with any certainty there is
plenty of evidence to suggest that certain popular tunes
were regarded as typical "ballad tunes". In the Roxburghe
ballads (which represents the most comprehensive collection
of sixteenth and seventeenth century ballads in England),
for example, each ballad of the first volume is headed with
the name of the tune to which it was sung[26].

It seems fairly certain, also, that each stanza of
the ballad was sung to the same tune, just as, for instance,
the twelfth century plays on the miracle of Saint Nicholas
consisted of frequent repetitions of the same melody. It
would be absurd to ridicule the supposed monotony of this
procedure, for if the real beauty of the ballads is to be
appreciated they must be performed in the same manner in
which they were presented in the Middle Ages, that is,
they must be sung. Although ballads cannot be considered
merely as poetry, or as music, their basis was musical rather

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[25] Quoted by A. Keith in "Scottish ballads, their
evidence of authorship and origin", English Association
Essays and Studies, 1926, No. 12, pp. 100-119.

[26] Roxburghe ballads, ed., Chappell and Ebsworth,
Hertford, printed for the Ballad Society by S. Austin and Sons,
1871, vol. 1.

than poetical and the simple features of their poetry
were engendered by a tune. Whether the tune was original
or not, hardly matters; what does seem to matter is that
the poetic process was that of a singer-poet rather than
a poet-singer.

If the tune is the fundamental basis of the ancient
ballad, it would account for the fact that the lilt and
expression of the tune is reflected in each and every stanza
of the ballad and that the metrical and expressive details
of the words and music are closely connected. Moreover, it
would probably explain the characteristic repetition (or
nearly so) of corresponding lines in succeeding stanzas,
like, for example, these lines from Sir Patric Spens:

> O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
>   Wi thair fans into their hand,
> O eir they se Sir Patrick Spence
>   Cum sailing to the land.
>
> O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
>   Wi thair gold kems in their hair,
> Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
>   For they'll se thame na mair.

> (No. 58 of Child's
> collection, ll. 33-40.)

The ballad tunes are not so impressed with modal
influences as many of the folk-songs, or it may be that the
Dorian and Ionian modes are definitely noticeable in the
old ballad tunes. The Cruel Mother, for instance, is in

the Dorian mode while <u>Little Sir Hugh</u>[27] lacking the

seventh can be either Ionian or Mixolydian. As the Ionian

mode is the same as our modern major scale and the Dorian

has a certain affinity with our minor scale the tonality

of these ballad tunes hardly ever suggests any archaic

quality to the modern ear. Of course, it is possible that

they have been so modified by succeeding generations that

all traces of modal influence have been destroyed.

From the foregoing remarks it seems fairly certain

that

> No one who has not heard ballads sung
> can have a just appreciation of their
> effectiveness. Ballad melodies, ... not
> only contribute greatly to their appeal
> but by their slow tempo and leisurely
> movement allow each stanza to work its
> influence on the listener[28].

Ballads were never intended to be read.

[27] <u>English folk songs</u>, <u>op. cit.</u>, No. 13 and 8.

[28] Baugh, <u>A literary history of England</u>, p. 312.

Chapter V

Just as one style of music, monody, unified music
and poetry into one entity, so another style, polyphony,
brought about their separation.

Like many other forms that cannot be explained
satisfactorily because of lack of evidence, _organum_[1] (as
early polyphony was called) has evoked much speculation
about the reason for its appearance. One of these theories
relates early _organum_ to the fact that the natural pitch
ranges of the four classes of human voices lie approximately
a fifth away from one another (in consecutive order from
bass to soprano). Since the congregation that sang the
responses at service did not consist of trained singers it
would be natural for tenors and basses and women and boys
to sing in ranges which they found comfortable, thus
unconsciously producing a simple _organum_. In a few words,
then, _organum_ probably originated in the desire of the
singers to sing a tune simultaneously at a different part
of the octave.

The simplest type of polyphony is called _strict
organum_. The rules for making this harmony were very simple.
The original plainsong was called the _vox principalis_;

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[1] _Organum_ made its appearance about the ninth century.
The earliest stages of its development took place before the
ars antiqua of the twelfth century.

to this might be added a second part - the <u>vox organalis</u>
a fourth or fifth lower.

a) <u>Organum of the fifth</u>

vox principalis

vox organalis

b) <u>Organum of the fourth</u>

vox principalis
vox organalis

Furthermore, the vox <u>organalis</u> could be doubled in the octave
above and the <u>vox principalis</u> in the octave below. This type
is called <u>composite organum</u>.

c) <u>Composite organum</u>

sit glo- ri- a Do- mi- ni

Independence of parts was achieved when the <u>vox</u>
<u>organalis</u> remained stationary but the <u>vox principalis</u>,
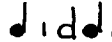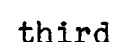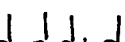
[2] Apel and Davison, <u>Anthology of Music</u>, No. $25a_2$.

[3] <u>Ibid</u>., No. 25_3.

[4] <u>Ibid</u>., No. 25_{b_1}.

beginning at unison progressed upward until the interval
of a fourth was reached, when both voices moved in parallel
fourths until the cadence where they again moved to unison.

Rex coe- li Do- mi- ne ma- ris un- di- so- ni [5]

The next step was towards rhythmical independence,
which was gained in the melismatic style of organum. Here
each note of the plainsong melody was sustained (tenor)
while the other voice part moved in free contrapuntal style.

d) Melismatic Organum

cun-　　　　　cti-　　po　　　　tens [6]

When this style of writing was introduced composers
had to find a satisfactory basis for keeping the different,
simultaneous parts of the music together in performance.
This was effected by the development of a measured music
which had its basis in the six rhythmic modes derived from
the Greeks. That is, at first, the musical time values

[5] Apel and Davison, Anthology of Music, No. 25b2.

[6] Ibid., No. 27b.

used for metrical texts were the ones required by the meter
of the text. Thus, a trochaic text would have required the
pattern ♩♪ ︱♩♪, which came to be the first rhythmic mode;
an iambic text, the pattern ♪♩ ︱♪♩ the second mode;
a dactylic text the pattern ♩. ♪♩ ︱♩. ♪♩ the third mode;
an anapaestic text, the pattern ♪♩ ♩. ︱♪ ♩♩. the fourth mode;
a spondaic text, the pattern ♩. ︱♩. the fifth mode; and
finally, a tribrachic text, the pattern ♩ ♪♪ ︱♪♪♪ the sixth
mode[7].

Obviously these rules would only apply to texts set
one syllable to a single note of music. But, how was the
rhythmical mode to be indicated in a part having <u>no</u> text or
in a composition where more than one note to a syllable was
to be used? To meet these difficulties medieval theorists
developed a scheme of note-shapes (not unlike our modern
system). In the early days there were four such shapes
a) double long ▄▄▖, b) long ▄▖ , c) breve ▄ ,
d) semibreve ◆ . Each of these is theoretically the third
or half of the preceding one - according as 'perfect' or
'imperfect' time was used (that is, what we should call
'triple' or 'duple' times). Later, ligatures were devised
to bind into a unity a rhythmic or melodic group of syllables.
Thus, the mensural system was brought about by the requirements
of polyphonic music.

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[7] The time values of these notes may be lengthened
or shortened. <u>New Oxford history of music</u>, pp. 319-320.

The introduction of measured rhythm into the music
of the church is particularly associated with the school
of Paris which was very active during the building of the
great Notre Dame cathedral (hence the name, Notre Dame School).
It is interesting to note that some French authors like
Amédée Gastoué believe that the advance in French music at
this time may have been due to the presence in Paris of
a large number of British students, such as Giraldus
Cambrensis, (a Welsh cleric, who, in Descriptio Kambriae
gives a great deal of information about music), Walter de
Odington, (the first British theorist), and John of Salisbury
(another cleric who was interested in the influence of music
on morals)[8].

Paris was for a period a very active centre of
theoretical discussion and of practical experiment for it
was at this time that the Notre Dame school evolved new
forms of polyphony including the clausula and the conductus.

Different from organum (which used an entire
plainsong as the cantus firmus basis) the clausula used a
melismatic section from a chant (like the Alleluia) for
the cantus firmus tenor. To this were added one or two
contrapuntal parts in faster-moving note values. All the
parts were sung without text or possibly played on instruments.
Here is an example from the Notre Dame School. It begins thus:

[8] Gastoué, A., Les primitifs de la musique française,
Paris, Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1922, p. 18f.

etc.

9

Do-

The polyphonic conductus used a freely composed tenor (that is, it was an original melody rather than a pre-existent one). All parts, which could be as many as four, moved in a more or less uniform rhythm. The text, which was in Latin, was normally metrical. It is characteristic of one class of conductus, however, that at points of structural importance, such as the beginnings and ends of lines or stanzas, all the parts simultaneously broke out into melismas of their own.

Ro-   ma gau-dens ju- bi la, etc.

10

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9 Apel and Davison, op. cit., No. 28e.

10 Ibid., No. 38a.

Later in the century these forms were evolved into
the most important of all forms in early polyphonic music,
the motet (which is generally called the Paris motet to
distinguish it from the later Renaissance motet). In
general, the motet had a pre-existent melody (broken up
into reiterated rhythmic patterns) for the lowest voice
while the other parts moved in quicker note values above it.
The texts which were different for all parts, were at first
in Latin but eventually secular texts were used[11]. As
multiplicity of text was particularly characteristic of the
motet it becomes obvious why this type could not possibly
be used to convey a story; the music was all important.

Another polyphonic form of the thirteenth century
was the rondel, which was a three-part song, each of whose
phrases was sung through thrice. At every repetition the
singers changed parts, thus opening the way for the contra-
puntal devices of imitation and canon.

The ars nova of the fourteenth century represents a
general freeing of style from the old influences of organum
and conductus. A greater variety of rhythm, more shapely
melodic curves, and more independently moving voice parts
were the marks of the new style.

There are two factors, then, in the development of

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11 Although the tenor had a text in Latin, it is
possible that it was often performed on an instrument, for
Apel and Davison list a motet for instruments (No. 32e)
which has the same plainsong indication that No. 32d has,
"In Seculum".

polyphony which brought about the independence of poetry:
(1) melodic independence of the voices; that is, a
departure from strict parallel motion of two or more voice
parts, and (2) rhythmical independence, where two or more
notes in one voice-part are sung to one note in the other
parts. As long as polyphony remained in strict parallelism
there was little clash of text and music. On the other hand,
when melodic and rhythmic independence were established
composers could no longer use music as a vehicle for words.
As a result, a new type of poet appeared in the fourteenth
century; one who wrote poetry according to rhetorical and
metrical rules rather than musical ones.

Although the new poets were more literary in their
outlook than those of the preceding centuries they did not
completely detach their poetry from the influence of music.
They still recognized the close affinity of the two arts,
but at the same time insisted that each had an interest
of its own.

These principles can be traced in the works of
Chaucer, the Pearl poet, and Langland. The rebellion
against the old artificial forms of verse based on music,
for example, is illustrated by Chaucer's experiments with
rhyme royal and the five-stress stanza and the return to
the old alliterative forms in the Pearl and Piers Plowman
while the traditional relationship of the two arts survived
in the poets' knowledge of music and the use they made of

that knowledge in their works.

Geoffrey Chaucer was born about 1340. Whether or
not he was a musician cannot be determined because of lack
of evidence. But from certain entries in the Royal Household
accounts it seems probable that Chaucer spent his early
years as a squire in the Royal Household. Since music
was part of the seven knightly probitates[12], then it would
seem likely that Chaucer as a squire would have had some
training in music.

Although it cannot be proved conclusively that Chaucer
was skilled as a musician it is known, from internal evidence
in his works, that he was keenly interested in music. He
never lost an opportunity of describing or alluding to its
general use and of bestowing it as an accomplishment upon
the pilgrims and the heroes and heroines of his several poems.
It was to the tune of the bagpipes that the Miller brought
the company out of town, the young squire "... koude songes
make and wel endite[13]", and well could the friar "...synge
and pleyen on a rote[14]"; and

> ... in his harpyng, whan that he hadde songe,
> His eyen twynkled in his heed aryght[15].

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[12] The seven probitates, according to Chaucer's description
of the squire in the "General Prologue" of the Canterbury tales
11. 80-100, included the ability to dance, follow musical notation,
read and compose verse, serve food and wine, to take part in jousts
and war, hunt and understand falconry, and finally to perform
court duties adequately.

[13] "General prologue", Canterbury tales, I, (A), 1.95.
This and the next four quotations quoted by C. C. Olson,
"Chaucer and the music of the fourteenth century", Speculum,
1941, vol. 16, pp. 72-77.

[14] Ibid, 1. 236.

[15] Ibid., 1. 266-267.

The Pardoner "ful loude he soong 'Com hider, love, to me!'" while "this Somonour bar to hym a stif burdoun[16]". The Prioress sang the divine service "Entuned in hir nose ful semely[17]", and told the moving tale of the little choir-boy singing "Alma redemptoris Mater". Absolon, in the Miller's tale, sang a descant to a tune that he played on the fiddle, while rivalling the young squire as a songster was Nicholas who had

> ... a gay sautrie,
> On which he made a-nyghtes melodie
> So swetely that all the chambre rong;
> And Angelus ad virginem he song;
> And after that he song the kynges noote,
> Ful often blessed was his myrie throte[18]

If Chaucer was not a musician himself, he certainly displayed a remarkable knowledge of many phases of the art. It is true that he showed little familiarity with theoretical writers, Boethius and Pythagoras being the only ones to hold any interest for him, but there are many passages which seem to indicate more than a layman's knowledge of music. One example is his discussion of "physical nature of sound[19]" in the second book of the House of fame (ll. 765-823). Here are five lines from the extract:

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16 "General prologue", Canterbury tales, I, (A), ll. 672-673.

17 Ibid., l. 123.

18 Miller's tale, I, (A), ll. 3213-3218. Quoted by Olson, op. cit., p. 78.

19 Olson, op. cit., p. 71.

> Eke, whan men harpe-strynges smyte,
> Whether hyt be moche or lyte,
> Loo, with the strok the ayr tobreketh;
> And ryght so breketh it when men speketh.
> Thus wost thou wel what thing is speche[19a].

Another instance is his use of the medieval theory of the music of the spheres, once in the <u>Parliament of fowls</u>:

> Thanne shewede he hym the lytel erthe that here is,
> At regard of the hevenes quantite;
> And after shewede he hym the nyne speres,
> And after that the melodye herde he
> That cometh of thilke speres thryes thre,
> That welle is of musik and melodye
> In this world here, and cause of armonye[20].

and once in <u>Troilus and Criseyde</u>:

> His lighte goost ful blisfully is went
> Up to the holughnesse of the eighthe spere,
> In convers letyng everich element;
> And ther he saugh, with ful avysement,
> The erratik sterres, herkenyng armonye
> With sownes ful of hevenyssh melodie[21].

Of course, such statements may only be an indication of Chaucer's wide reading, for Robinson (in his notes) suggests that the theory expressed in the passage on physical sound was well-known in the Middle Ages and could be found in "Boethius' <u>De Musica</u>, Bk. i (especially chaps. 3 and 14)....[22]" Moreover, it is possible that Chaucer knew of the singing of the spheres from Macrobius': <u>Commentary</u> (with which he was familiar) for it makes a statement on the harmony of the

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[19a] <u>House of Fame</u>, ll. 777-781.

[20] ll. 57-63, Olson, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 85.

[21] Bk. V, ll. 1808-1813.

[22] <u>The poems of Chaucer</u>, p. 892.

spheres thus:

> ... a Siren sits upon each of the spheres,
> thus indicating that by the motions of the
> spheres divinities were provided with song;
> for a singing Siren is equivalent to a God
> in the Greek acceptance of the word. More-
> over, cosmogonists have chosen to consider
> the nine Muses as the tuneful song of the
> eight spheres and the one predominant
> harmony that comes from all of them /2_7
> In the Theogeny, Hesiod calls the eighth
> Muse Urania because the eighth sphere, the
> star-bearer, situated above the seven
> errant spheres, is correctly referred to
> as the sky; and to show that the ninth was
> the greatest, resulting from the harmony of
> all sounds together, he added: "Calliope,
> too, who is preeminent among all"[23].

All his knowledge of music did not come from books,

for there are several poems in which he exhibits a lively

interest in the technical side of music. In this extract

from the House of fame, for example, Chaucer not only gives

a comprehensive list of the instruments of his day, but he

describes the various kinds of musicians as well.

> Ther herde I pleyen on an harpe
> That sowned bothe wel and sharpe,
> Orpheus ful craftely,
> And on his syde, faste by,
> Sat the harper Orion,
> And Eacides Chiron,
> And other harpers many oon,
> And the Bret Glascurion;
> And smale harpers with her gleës
>
> . . . .

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[23] Macrobius, Commentary on the dream of Scipio,
transl., W. H. Stahl, New York, Columbia University Press,
1952, Bk. 2, ch. 3, pp. 193-194.

> Tho saugh I stonden hem behynde,
> Afer fro hem, al be hemselve,
> Many thousand tymes twelve,
> That maden lowde mynstralcies
> In cornemuse and shalemyes,
> And many other maner pipe,
> That craftely begunne to pipe,
> Bothe in doucet and in rede,
> That ben at festes with the brede;
> And many flowte and liltyng horn,
> And pipes made of grene corn,
> As han thise lytel herde-gromes,
>
> . . . .
>
> Ther saugh I famous, olde and yonge,
> Pipers of the Duche tonge,
> To lerne love-daunces, sprynges,
> Reyes, and these straunge thynges.
> Tho saugh I in an other place
> Stonden in a large space,
> Of hem that maken blody soun
> In trumpe, beme, and claryoun;
> For in fight and blod-shedynge
> Ys used gladly clarionynge[24].

Moreover, the last four lines just quoted and these

from the Knight's Tale

> Pypes, trompes, nakers, clariounes,
> That in the bataille blowen blody sounes[25];

seem to indicate that Chaucer was familiar with the martial

music of his time.

Furthermore, his clear-cut observations of the amateur

musicians of his day often clear up troublesome questions

about fourteenth-century music that musicologists have had

difficulty in answering. To the question whether instrumentalists

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[24] ll. 1201-1209, 1214-1225, 1233-1242. For a list of instruments used by Chaucer in the Canterbury tales v. Olson, op. cit., p. 73.

[25] I (A) 2511-2512.

ever performed as soloists Absolon gives at least one answer.

> In twenty manere koude he trippe and daunce
> After the scole of Oxenford tho,
> And with his legges casten to and fro,
> And pleyen songes on a small rubible;
> Therto he song som tyme a loud quynyble,
> And as wel koude he pleye on a giterne[26].

Apparently Absolon usually played his songs on the "giterne"
but sometimes added descant as an extra flourish. The question
of whether music was taught in the schools, is also answered by
Chaucer for, in the _Prioress tale_, the "litel clergion" heard
the music of the church service being taught as he attended school[27].

> A little scole of cristen folk ther stood
> Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were
> Children an heep, ycomen of Cristen blood,
> That lerned in that scole yeer by yere
> Swich manere doctrine as men used there,
> This is to seyn, to syngen and to rede,
>
> . . . .
>
> As he sat in the scole at his prymer,
> He _Alma redemptoris_ herde synge,
> As children lerned hire antiphoner[28];

Of course this variety of musical knowledge might
only indicate a superficial interest in a few well-known
facts, instead of a careful training, but I doubt it, and
for the following reasons.

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[26] _Miller's tale_, I, (A), ll. 3328-3333. Quoted by
Olson, _op. cit._, p. 77.

[27] In his explanatory notes F. N. Robinson points out
that the "litel scole" was probably a "regular village school"
rather than a "school of choir boys," p. 840.

[28] _The Prioress tale_, VII, ll. 495-500, 517-519.
Mentioned by Olson, _op. cit._, p. 80.

If we examine his lyric poetry we find that he often used forms that had derived their structure from musical techniques, such as the ballade and rondel. Originally the words and music of these genres were a single entity as in the old French ballade, Douce dame[29]. If the musical form (ab ab cd E) of this example is compared with the poetic form used by Chaucer in this ballade from the Legend of Good Women

		Rhyme	Musical Form
(1)			
Hyd, Absolon, thy gilte tresses clere;		a	a
Ester, ley thow thy meknesse al adoun;		b	b
Hyd, Jonathas, al thyn frendly manere;		a	a
Penolope and Marcia Catoun,		b	b
Mak of youre wyfhod no comparisoun;		b	c
Hyde ye youre beautes, Ysoude and Eleyne:		c	d
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.		C	E

(2)

Thy fayre body, lat it nat apeere,
Laveyne; and thow, Lucresse of Rome toun,
And Polixene, that boughte love so dere,
Ek Cleopatre, with al thy passioun,
Hide ye youre trouth in love and youre renoun;
And thow, Tysbe, that hast for love swich peyne:
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.

(3)

Herro, Dido, Laodomya, alle in-fere,
Ek Phillis, hangynge for thy Demophoun,
And Canace, espied by thy chere,
Ysiphile, betrayed with Jasoun,
Mak of youre trouthe in love no bost ne soun;
Nor Ypermystre or Adriane, ne pleyne:
Alceste is here, that al that may disteyne.

it will be found that the structure of the two works

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[29] Quoted on page 40 of this thesis.

[30] "G" text, ll. 203-209.

is identical, for each have a repeated couplet and each have a repeated last line that serves as a refrain. In Chaucer's poem, however, the repetition of the last line for all verses serves no literary purpose but is a relic of the original musical form of the ballade. Moreover, Chaucer may have had a definite tune in mind when he wrote some of his poems, for, of the lovely Valentine rondel in the Parliament of fowls, he tells us that "The note, I trowe, imaked was in Fraunce[31]."

The most important indication of Chaucer's musical ability was not these external references to music (important though they may be) but the way in which he resolved the English speech into a lilting music of his own. As long as he wrote pieces like the charming Valentine rondel or the superb lament of Troilus[32] he did not need music to accompany his verses, they were sheer music in themselves.

Although it is not known who the Pearl poet was his poems seem to indicate that he had a background similar to that of Chaucer. Whereas there can be no positive proof, his evident knowledge of the gentleman's pastimes of war, hunting, singing, and dancing lends credibility to this suggestion.

That he had at least some familiarity with martial

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[31] l. 677. The artificiality of form that was observable in the ballade was also present in the rondel.

[32] Bk. III, ll. 1450-1463.

music is evident in the shrill sound of his clarion
"call to arms" in Nebuchadnezzar's camp before Jerusalem,
"Cler claryoun crak cryed onlofte[33]"; or in the noisy and
frightening blare of trumpets in "Blastes out of bryӡt
brasse brestes so hyӡe[34]". One can almost hear the roll of
the military kettle drums in this line from <u>Sir Gawain
and the Green Knight</u>, "Nwe nakryn noyse with þe noble pipes[35]."

Judged by his precise knowledge of Venery he was a
man who had often raced after the game with horsemen and
hounds and had heard the clear notes of the bugle through
the forest air:

> Hunterez wyth hyӡe horne hasted hem after
> Wyth such a crakkande kry, as klyffes
>   haden brusten[36].

In the hunting scenes he introduced three important calls,
the mote (three notes sounded at the unleashing of the hounds[37]),
the recheat (four syllable call sounded three times on the
second day to urge on the hounds), and the prise (four notes

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[33] "Cleanness", <u>Early alliterative poems in the W.
Midland dialect</u>, ed., R. Morris, London, Trübner and Co.,
E.E.T.S. (Original Series), 1864, No. 1, 1210.

[34] <u>Ibid.</u>, l. 1783.

[35] <u>Gawain and the green knight</u>, ed., R. Morris, London,
Trübner and Co., E.E.T.S. (Original Series), 1864, No. 4, 1.118.
I am assuming that the <u>Pearl</u> poet also wrote these other two poems.

[36] <u>Ibid.</u>, ll. 1165-1166.

[37] <u>Ibid.</u>, l. 1141.

succeeded by another four, a little longer, when the deer is taken[38]).

The serious pursuits of war and hunting were laid aside in the evening and the ladies and gentlemen gathered in the great hall for an evening's dancing and singing. Like Chaucer, the _Pearl_ poet was familiar with the amusements of the upper classes. In _Gawain_ he showed them on one evening enjoying the songs of the minstrels[39] while on another, they spent the time in singing and dancing.

His knowledge of music does not remain in the realm of the interested amateur, however, for it embraces all forms of music, vocal and instrumental, secular and ecclesiastical. This quotation from Gawain certainly seems to suggest a knowledge of the technical names of some of the types of popular songs:

> Much glam & gle glent vp þer-inne
> Aboute þe fyre vpon flet, & on fele wyse
> At þe soper & after, mony aþel songeȝ,
> As coundutes of kryst-masse & caroleȝ newe[40].

The inclusion of carols in the merrymaking is not unusual as they were a popular type of song and would be known to most people of the fourteenth century. But, as the _conductus_ was no longer in favour[41], it would suggest that the _Pearl_

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[38] _Gawain and the Green Knight_, ll. 1362-1364.

[39] _Ibid._, l. 1952.

[40] _Ibid._, ll. 1652-1655.

[41] Milford, H., ed., _Oxford history of music_, Oxford University Press, London, 1929, vol. 1, p. 137ff. Moreover, in Apel and Davison's collection, there is not a single example of _conductus_ listed for the fourteenth century.

poet had specialized training of some sort. Moreover,

there are other references which show that he had more

than a perfunctory knowledge of music, for example, this

free adaptation of Revelations xiv, 2-3:

> As harporeȝ harpen in her harpe,
> þat nwe songe þay songen ful cler.
> In sounande noteȝ a gentyl carpe,
> Ful fayre þe modeȝ þay fonge in fere[42].

The "modeȝ" have reference to the eight ecclesiastical modes

of plainsong which suggests that he may at one time have

been under church musical discipline, possibly at one of

the choir schools. One of their texts, The tonal, might

have been the source of his knowledge[43].

Finally, like Chaucer he seems to have extended

information about the instruments in use:

> & þer watȝ solace & songe wher sorȝ hatȝ ay cryed;
> For aungelles with instrumentes of organes & pypes,
> & rial ryngande rotes, & þe reken fypel.
> & alle hende þat honestly moȝt an hert glade,
> Aboutte my lady watȝ lent[44].

It is in his manipulation of words to simulate

different sounds, that he shows the closest association of

words and music. In his remarkable use of onomatopoeia to

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[42] "Pearl", Early alliterative poems in the W. Midland dialect, ll. 881-884.

[43] For further information on "The tonal" consult W. H. Frere, The sarum use, Cambridge University Press, 1901, Introduction, pp. 32-33.

[44] "Cleanness", Early alliterative poems in the W. Midland dialect, ll. 1080-84.

imitate the rhythm and sound of voice and instrument he
surpasses all other poets of the time. This skill is not
accidental; it suggests that he must have had a cultured ear
and an understanding of the techniques of music to be so
exact in the reproduction of their sound.

Different from men of the world like Chaucer and the
Pearl poet was the author of Piers Plowman. Although the
identity of the author is open to question he is generally
conceded to be William Langland, "a clerical vagabond /who
earned/ his bread.../by singing/ the Paternoster, Dirige,
Placebo, Psalter, and Seven Penitential Psalms... for those
who contributed to his support[45]."

Evidently Langland's training had made him hostile
to the art of the minstrel for he never lost an opportunity
of disparaging the profession, classing musicians with knaves
and rascals. On one occasion, for example, he had "A rybibour
and a ratoner a rakere and hus knave[46]" welcome Glutton,
while on another he said that Mede was

As comuyn as þe Cart-wei- to knaues and to alle;
To Preostes, to Minstrals to Mesels in hegges[47],

Moreover, when he mentioned a musician in a figure of speech

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[45] Baugh, A Literary history of England, p. 245.

[46] Piers Plowman, C text, Passus 7, 1.371.

[47] Ibid., A text, Passus 3, 11. 127-128.

he was usually not very flattering to the musician. One
time, for instance, he called lunatics"...murye-mouthede
men mynstrales of heuene[48]," and at another he said

> ... to spille speche þat spyre is of grace,
> And goddes gleman and a game of heuene;
> Wolde neuere þe faithful fader his fithel were
> vntempred,
> We his gleman a gedelynge a goer to tauernes![48]

Finally, he seemed to regard minstrelsy as a sin telling
men that they should "Nouȝt to fare as a fitheler or a frere
for to seek festes[49]" nor "... to solace ȝoure soules suche
ministrales to haue[50]".

That Langland did not have the worldly musical
background of Chaucer and the _Pearl_ poet is borne out by
his own words:

> Ich can nat tabre ne trompe ne telle faire gestes,
> Farten, ne fiþelen, at festes, ne harpen;
> Iapen ne Iogelen, ne gentelliche pipe;
> Noþer sailen, ne sautrien, ne singe with þe giterne[51].

Moreover, instead of singing "compleyntes" to his lady as
a court poet would have done, Langland pictured the common
folk at work and play,

> And þanne seten somme and songen atte nale,
> And hulpen erie his half acre with "how! trolli-lolli[52]!"

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[48] _Piers Plowman_, C text, Passus 10, 1. 126.

[49] _Ibid._, B text, Passus 10, 1. 92.

[50] _Ibid._, B text, Passus 13, 1. 443.

[51] _Ibid._, C text, Passus 16, 11. 205-208.

[52] _Ibid._, B text, Passus 6, 11. 117-118.

or described many hundreds of angels that

>...harpeden & songen,
>Cuplat caro, purgat caro; regnat deus dei caro[53].

Finally, it was not the clarion's call to arms that interested Langland, for, with him, it was "Treuth /that/ tromped[54]" and "pees" that "...piped... of poysye a note[55]."

    Although his temperament was alien to the jingles of the court poets even he had his moments when he felt that it was a reproach not knowing the music of the world:

>þei conne namore mynstralcye ne muske, men to glade,
>Than Munde þe mylnere, of multa fecit deus[56]!

To a professional singer of masses, as Langland was believed to be, moreover, the Latin lines so liberally sprinkled throughout his work would be familiar to him as something chanted rather than read. Since he slipped naturally from Anglo-Saxon to Latin to Anglo-Saxon again in his work it is not surprising to find that the Anglo-Saxon lines can also be chanted. Indeed, these lines slide so easily into any of the "eight tones" specified for the psalter that there is at least a possibility that Langland had these tunes in mind when he composed his work. Now this statement does not mean that the poem was chanted instead of read, (though it could

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[53] Piers Plowman, B text, Passus 18, l. 405-406.

[54] Ibid., B text, Passus 13, l. 230.

[55] Ibid., B text, Passus 13, l. 407.

[56] Ibid., B text, Passus 10, ll. 43-44.

have been and may have been by the poet himself), nor does it imply that alliterative poetry was connected with the music of the church; it merely suggests that Langland was so steeped in ecclesiastical music that he could effortlessly reproduce the familiar rhythms of the church without altering the structure of his poem.

In this century, then, when poetry was no longer written primarily to be sung or intoned it is interesting to note that the three most important writers of England still made use of music, in one way or another, in their poetry.

Chapter VI

In the fifteenth century, though much that was
medieval still survived, the continental poets and musicians
of the new era were looking forward, experimenting with,
and developing the new forms that were to make the Renaissance
so memorable.

In the field of drama there was one development
that is worthy of notice, namely, the creation of the
spectacular court pageants. Oddly enough the chief factor
in their development was the ancient foundation of the
Chapel Royal, which supplied the religious exercises of the
court. Since the directors of the Chapel Royal were not just
music directors but had at their disposal actors, producers,
and writers, it is easy to understand how an establishment
of this nature became connected with the worldly plays of
the court. Some idea of the importance attached to this
school is conveyed by the following extract from the
Harleian manuscript 433, where Richard III empowered John
Melynek, Gentleman of the Chapel Royal

> ... to take and seize for the king all such
> singing men and children expert in the science
> of music, within all places of the realm, as
> well in cathedral, churches, colleges,
> chapels,...exempt places or elsewhere[1].

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[1] Flood, W. H. G., Early Tudor composers, Oxford
University Press, 1925, p. 14.

At first, the men and boys were probably drawn into the dramatists' entertainment merely to add incidental music, but by the end of the century they had begun to act.

In the music of the fifteenth century the desire to bring some order into chord progressions and to relate them to one another becomes evident. This composition by Lionel Power gives some indication of the attempts that were made at functional harmony.

In vocal music attention was largely concentrated on the sensuous effect of combining the different voices rather than on the sentiments of the text. In fact, musicians of the fifteenth century paid little or no attention to the text they were setting; the medieval balance of word and music was gone. Even Dunstable was guilty in this respect, for in one bar of the following extract he twice places a rest in the middle of a word.

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[2] Apel and Davison, op. cit., No. 63.

est de-vi- - - - um -

me-di- ci - - na. - -

For the rest, the old forms of secular music and
poetry had not changed; the _ballade_, _chanson_, _rondel_, and
virelai were what they had been in the thirteenth and
fourteenth centuries, the rondel, for example being used in
Dunstable's settings of _O rosa bella_ and _Puisque m'amour_[4].
Moreover, the traditions of the church were carried on in
Damett's setting of the hymn _Beata Dei genitrix_ and
Dunstable's _Sancta Maria_[5].

With the coming of polyphony, then, the poets' and
musicians' conception of the inter-relationship of music
and poetry was completely changed. Writer and musician,
for example, were no longer a single person but were two
artists trained to exploit their individual arts. Although
poets still knew a great deal about music (employing figures

[3] This extract is the top two lines only of bars 118-120
of Dunstable's _Veni Sancte Spiritus_ found in "Complete works
of John Dunstable" _Musica Britannica_, ed., M. Bukofzer, for
Royal Musical Association and American Musicological Society,
London, Stainer and Bell Ltd., 1953, p. 91.

[4] _Ibid_., No. 54 and 55.

[5] Apel and Davison, _op. cit._, No. 64 and 62.

of speech borrowed from the language of music, using its rhythms for their lines, and simulating various musical sounds in their words), and musicians still employed texts for their songs, they no longer expected the two arts to be a single entity. Evidence of this changed outlook and practice may be found in the appearance of purely instrumental music (as in the Estampies _Lamento di Tristan_ and _Saltarello_ or the _Organ Estampie_[6]) and in the development of poetry that was written according to its own metrical rules[7]. The arts had finally separated.

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[6] Apel and Davison, _op. cit._, No. 59a, 59b, and 58.

[7] Note, for example, how Chaucer is thinking particularly of the metre in this passage from _Troilus and Criseyde_ when he suggests that his work might be either read or sung.

> Go, litel bok, go, litel myn tragedye,
> ....
> And for ther is so gret diversite
> In Englissh and in writyng of oure tonge,
> So prey I God that non myswrite the,
> Ne the mysmetre for defaute of tonge.
> And red wherso thou be, or elles songe.

> Bk. 5, ll. 1786-1797.

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